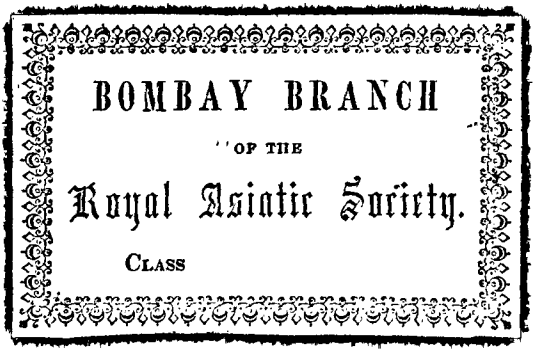

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SERMONS.

BY

THE REV. F. D. MAURICE, M.A.,
CHAPLAIN OF LINCOLN'S INN.

111619

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MATTHEW XV. 13.

"BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, EVERY PLANT, WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH NOT PLANTED, SHALL BE ROOTED UP."

OUR LORD had been proclaiming the principle, "*Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth him.*" It was a principle evidently of very wide application. It undermined a whole scheme of religion. The Jewish teachers felt how much was involved in it. "*Knowest thou,*" said the disciples to their Master, "*that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But He answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*"

Again He enunciated a universal maxim. But He did not leave the disciples to find applications of it. He left them in no doubt that the sect of the Pha-

risees was that plant of which He spoke; that this was to be rooted up. They must have wondered at the sentence. They must have been aware that many of the Pharisees were righteous only on the surface. They may have been long enough under our Lord's teaching to understand that conformity to an outward rule is very different from conformity to the Will of God. Still this sect, as such, was emphatically *the* religious sect. It was the witness against another sect, which made light of Divine ordinances, and would have substituted a morality not essentially different from that of the heathen schools, for everything that was peculiar to the faith of their fathers. The earlier Pharisees had been, no doubt, men of earnest character, desirous to save their countrymen from falling into indifference,—consistent witnesses, not merely for that which they believed to be true, but for that which was true. There must have been at all times among them men of sincere, elevated devotion. Their doctrines and professions kept alive an impression in the minds of the people that man's existence is not bounded by that which is present and visible. The disciples knew this. Must they not have asked themselves: "If such a plant, which has been growing for so long a time, is to be rooted out, what can we look for but a disturbance of all that is most sacred and precious in our nation and in ourselves?"

(1.) Such thoughts may have shaken the minds of

these humble fishermen; but they were not therefore unwholesome or mischievous thoughts. Our Lord wished them to believe that the axe had been laid to the root of the tree; that a great judgment-day of their nation was approaching; that not Earth only would be shaken, but also Heaven. He had prepared them by all His teaching for events of terrible import, events which would denote His coming and the end of an age. We may believe that He intended these words as one note of the trumpet which was announcing this day of convulsion and of doom. "It is not your Sadducees—the sect which you may fancy has defied God, and which has deserved His wrath,—it is not this which I tell you will be rooted out. It is that which bears on its banner the names of Religion and of God; it is that which believes itself to be the only plank between the nation and Atheism;—it is that which must wither and die, because it has not God for its root, because it does not derive its life and nourishment from Him."

(2.) But if the disciples needed this lesson, that they might not be startled by the fading away of much which had seemed to them fair and vigorous, they needed it still more that they might understand what there was in the Jewish soil which could not be rooted out,—what there was that would spread its fibres more widely, genially, and send out higher branches wherein the fowls of the air might dwell. The sect of the Pharisees, our Lord says, His heavenly

Father had *not* planted. That had been established by men with a kind of notion that it might further His glory, that it might preserve His Name from being forgotten, that it might put down His enemies. Faith, or Religion, was taken under its patronage; it watched over the interests of the Divine Kingdom. It was not thus that the first father of the nation had felt, when he went forth into the land of Canaan, not knowing whither he went. He had obeyed a call from the Voice of God. He had believed in a Righteous Lord Who ruled him. He had trusted that Lord, and had risen up a righteous man. He kept his flocks, lived with his wife, brought up his children, fought his battles as a servant of the Unseen Protector. He bore witness of that Protector by doing the work that was given him to do. He expected that God would be with his children, as He had been with him. He expected that that seed would multiply as the stars in Heaven, and that in it all the families of the earth should be blessed. The Heavenly Father *did* plant this seed. He *did* establish a Family which was bidden to trust Him and to obey Him. Of such a *Family* the Father of the Faithful was the beginner; not of a *Sect* which was to proclaim itself as the worshiper of Jehovah, and therefore to exalt itself and not Him.

Nor was Moses the author of any such sect. His heart yearned over his kinsfolk who were bondsmen to a tyrant. Slowly and reluctantly he yielded to

the conviction that the God of these slaves had called him to be their deliverer. He showed the tyrant that a God Who cared for outcasts was stronger than he and than his gods. He showed the slaves that the Lord God, the I AM, is a Deliverer. He bound them together in the name of that Deliverer, as subjects of a Law which no man could break without bringing punishment on himself. He taught them that the Unseen God desired to make them a brave and understanding people, to set them free from their own lusts, to restore them when they had transgressed. He taught them that God Himself was in the midst of them, binding them together as a Nation, and that they were none of them to doubt of His presence and His help. In one word, Moses was God's instrument in planting a *Nation* of Israelites, which was to bear witness of Him as the One Living God of the whole earth. The Laws and Ordinances which he published denoted that this God was the King of the Land, and that the people of it were His subjects, and that it was a revolt from Him to worship any visible thing. Moses was not the founder of a Jewish sect, to testify against heathen sects, or in favour of Jewish rites and customs.

Again, we are told that David was called by God from being a keeper of sheep to be the shepherd over His people Israel. We are told that by defeats and victories, as a popular champion and as an outlaw, by the strength which was given him to rule righte-

ously, by the punishments that were inflicted on him when he ruled unrighteously,—he was taught that he was at all times under a higher King, that he lived to bear witness of this King; that he could only bear this witness by judging between man and man, by putting down the enemies of the Nation, by uniting its members, by preparing the Gentiles to feel that the same King was reigning over them, and would one day be manifested to them as their Light and their Deliverer. That is to say, David was the man after God's heart, just so far as he did not set himself to be the head of a self-created sect, but the called chief of a divine Nation, which was to expand itself till it comprehended all Mankind within its circle.

(3.) And now the crisis was come—the disciples of Jesus were to understand that it was come—which would decide whether this Family of which Abraham the friend of God had been the first earthly father, this Nation which Moses had led out of the house of bondage, and which under David had acquired the consistency of a Kingdom, should end in a sect or in a number of sects, or should unfold itself into that *Universal Society*, of which they and all the Prophets had believed that it was the germ. The religious party among the Jews could conceive no higher blessing than their complete triumph over their enemies, than the putting down of all the notions and opinions which were adverse to theirs. What else could be desired? Would not religion then be exalted to its

highest place? Would it not be the religion which they had learnt from the Divine books? Would not all that was irreligious, all heathenism, all imperfect, insincere, heretical Judaism, be banished into outer darkness?

(4.) The disciples of Jesus learnt gradually from His lips that they were called and chosen out to preach to their own countrymen that the Son of David and the Son of Abraham had come to bind together in one Publicans and Sinners, Jews, Galileans, Samaritans; that this Son of David and of Abraham was the *Son of Man*, Who would at last gather all Nations into one; that this Son of Man was the *Son of God*, in Whose image men had been created, Who was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person; Who was, like Moses, a Deliverer from bondage; Who, because He was a Son and not a Servant, could break all the bonds which Moses could not break, could fulfil the Righteousness of which Moses only testified. With this message they were to go forth, with this Gospel to Jews and Gentiles. As they bore it, they soon discovered that the natural and necessary antagonists of it were the sects; that Sadducees and Pharisees hated it equally; that they saw in it the destruction of the sect-principle; that they felt they could only maintain even a temporary ascendency by fighting with this rival as for life and death.

Then, when they found how mighty this sect-prin-

ciple was, and what numbers were pledged to it, and how it identified itself with even the better thoughts and faith of some, so that they supposed everything must perish if that were to give way,—they must have recollected the words which had been once spoken to them: "*Every plant which my Heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out.*" As they saw how wicked these Jewish sects became in the latter days of the commonwealth, they will have become more sure that the sentence must one day be executed, though the cry "*How long, O Lord!*" will have often been in their hearts and on their lips.

(5.) They had still deeper reasons for raising that cry. They saw too clearly that there were other soils besides that of Judæa on which this old plant could thrive; that the root of bitterness from which it sprang could be traced in every Church which was baptized into the all-embracing, all-uniting Name. How terrible the discovery was to St. Paul, the first Epistle to the Corinthians may teach us formally and directly; every other of his Epistles, if we look into the heart of it. The more profoundly he entered into the meaning of the Gospel with which he was entrusted, the more he dwelt upon the Son of God as the destroyer of all walls of partition, as the Atoner of God and of Man, as the Head of a body fitly joined together and inhabited by a quickening, uniting Spirit, as intending to bring together unto Himself all things in Heaven and Earth,—the more

startling did the contradiction seem, that party names and watchwords should be heard in His Society. Everything he spoke and wrote was aimed at this contradiction. If it was necessary to speak of himself or his fellow-workers, it was as of Apostles called out by God, sent with a message of peace to men. If he spoke of the members of the Church, it was to tell them that they were called to be saints.

This language strikes as much at the root of the sect-maxim as that in which he speaks of praying to the Father of the whole family in Heaven and Earth; as that in which he claims all members of the Church as members of Christ, and bids them not live unworthy of their vocation. For the sect-profession is: "*We* have bound ourselves together for the purpose of promoting certain great objects; *we* have adopted certain distinct badges of *our* faith; *we* are pledged to oppose that which interferes with it." Christ chooses the *Church* to be a witness of His love to mankind. The *sect* chooses Christ because it is convinced that His doctrine is better than that of the founders of other religions; and then goes on to choose Cephas, or Paul, or Apollos, as having the most refined or satisfactory form of that doctrine. So the person of Christ becomes lost in certain opinions which the sects have taken up respecting Him.

(6.) What had the Apostles to support them under the actual sight of this Sectarianism, unfolding itself in the Churches which God had enabled them to

build; under the certain conviction that it would not cease in the ages that were coming, but would spread more and more? They had these supports. First, they were certain that what God had planted would not be uprooted, but would bear fruit from generation to generation. Christ would remain, however men might form notions concerning Him, and separate themselves into parties professing those notions. And they did not dare—they did not find it possible—to think of human society except as constituted in Christ. It was the confusion, the unbelief of men, to regard themselves as capable of fellowship and existence without Him, to suppose that they would congregate merely because they found solitude inconvenient. It was the business of Christ's ministers to proclaim that there could have been no families, no nations, no social impulses, no laws, nothing to resist the selfish, self-seeking tendencies which each of us is conscious of in himself and complains of in his neighbours, if there had not been one living centre of the whole body of Humanity, one Head of every man. And therefore the Ministers of Christ were to assure themselves that the Church of Christ, which does not stand in the faith of men but in the Will of God, would continue to live and to bear witness of the order which He has established in His Universe, and of His purpose to bring all into one, whatever powers might threaten to crush it from without or to undermine it from within.

And, secondly, they were to remember the words, "*Every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out.*" Whatever unions men have entered into for the support of some theories or opinions of theirs,—whatever plans they have devised in their wisdom to prevent the ark of God from falling, or, as they say in their coarse jargon, "*to promote the interests of religion,*"—carry in them the pledge and prophecy of dissolution. They may look plausible in the eyes of men; they may so work themselves into the substance of that plant which our Heavenly Father *has* planted as to appear inseparable from it; but they are of a different root. He can part them, though His servants cannot. He can bind the one in bundles to be burned, and gather the fruit of the other into His garner for ever.

(7.) My brethren, I believe that no men ever needed the lesson which is contained in this verse more than we do, and that we should ask God earnestly to teach us how we may apply it. We are all, of course, ready enough to apply it to our opponents. Each party turns to the one which it wishes to overthrow, and says solemnly, "*Yours* is a plant which God has not planted, therefore it will be rooted up;" and proceeds as best it may, by honest means or dishonest, to the work of uprooting. The Protestant says to the Romanist, "Your Popedom was not planted by our Heavenly Father; *it* will be rooted up." The Romanist says to the Protestant, "All your schools and

parties were not planted by our Heavenly Father; *they* shall be rooted up." Which is right? Which is using Christ's words in the true sense? Which is abusing them? I apprehend that *all* are using them in their true sense; that *none* is abusing them. Each is proclaiming God's judgment, which must stand, though heaven and earth pass away; each is a prophet of that which shall assuredly come to pass. And each is, to a great extent, justified in its allegations against the immorality and ungodliness which the system it denounces has produced, and is likely to produce. Only, brethren, it behoves us to remember that *we* are not to seek for the causes which lead to this immorality and ungodliness in other men, but in ourselves. *We* are to look for them where we can know their malignity, where we can be instruments in God's hands of casting them out. There is a plant in your heart and mine which our Heavenly Father has not planted, and which must be rooted out. It is that same plant of self-seeking, of opinionativeness, of party-spirit, which has shed its poison over the Church and over the world. It springs in us from that same root of unbelief in One Who is the Head of us all, Whose Life is the common Life of all, out of which all sects and parties have proceeded,—from that root of pride which has led to the amazing delusion, that God has not called us to be His servants and children, but that we are taking Him to be our Lord and Father. If once by His grace we are delivered from that pre-

sumption, we shall not doubt that He has taken care of His own name and His own kingdom in this earth of ours, however ignorantly His creatures have been setting themselves to defend and exalt one or the other. We shall not talk of a set of men who have preserved His faith and Church which He had suffered to go into ruin; but we shall believe that His Church has stood firm in His Son; that in every land He has testified of its existence by His ordinances, which no corruptions of men could set aside; by the light He has kindled in the hearts of unknown myriads, which no darkness of theirs could quench; by the witness which He has borne of a Unity among men, that no artificial arrangements could create, and no divisions could destroy.

(8.) Holding this to be so, we shall remember that when Christ spoke to His disciples of the rooting up of the Pharisee sect, He added, "*Let them alone.*" The work will be done; but it is not yours to do. *You* cannot separate the tares from the wheat; *you* cannot distinguish between the *man* whom I love and the *Pharisee* whom I hate. If you try to destroy the sect which my Heavenly Father has not planted, you would destroy something of that Church which He *has* planted, which He is watching over, till it attain the full stature of Christ. We are to listen to the denunciations of parties against each other, and to acknowledge, with trembling, that they are all too well founded. We should not eagerly join in them, for we

have another and nobler work which God has given us to do, the work of showing the members of parties that when their mud houses fall down, there is *a house of God not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens,* in which they may find a refuge. Above all, we must never be tempted to that greatest of all sins, the forming a new party for the sake of displacing or overcoming existing parties. That temptation will present itself in ten thousand forms. The Evil Spirit will come as an Angel of Light. He will tell us that it is not a new party we are to construct—that would be very wicked—but a protest against all parties; in fact, a larger Church, a freer and more expansive Christianity. Accursed sophist! *We* construct a Church! *We* lay a broader foundation for Humanity than God has laid in His Son! *We* invent a more comprehensive Gospel than the Gospel of the Ascension, that He has gone upon high, leading captivity captive, glorifying our Nature at the right-hand of His Father! Such an experiment would concentrate all the arrogance and unbelief of former sects into one grand, devilish scheme for our self-exaltation. The Society we assisted in forming would be the Society of Antichrist. No, brethren! in this sense of attempting to compete with parties, or imitate them, or supersede them, we must let them wholly alone. In another sense, we must never let them alone; we must be continually tormenting them. The Apostles did not uproot the sect of the Pharisees, but they preached the

corner-stone of Humanity. Against that stone, this sect stumbled and fell. It could not confess a One Lord Who came to bind Jew and Greek, bond and free, Heaven and Earth, in one. It would maintain itself and its own traditions against man and against God. And man and God were too strong for it.

So it will be with all parties and all systems which have been formed by human wit, with ever so religious a purpose, and which our Heavenly Father has not planted. The compromises of statesmen and churchmen will not weaken them. Indifference and infidelity will give them a force which is not their own. But they will shrink and shrivel before the blast of the breath of His mouth, Who is the Son of Man and the Son of God, the Saviour and the Judge of the whole earth.

Whit-Sunday.

May 23, 1858.

ACTS II. 39.

"FOR THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL."

THESE words have been an occasion of great perplexity to Christians, not in one age, but almost in every age since they were spoken. CAN it be said that the promise, which was fulfilled to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, was fulfilled also to those who heard their words and to their children; has been fulfilled and is fulfilling itself in Britain, in North America, in Australia? That in all these countries men may ask for a Spiritual guidance and receive it, may seek for Sanctification and find it, is not questioned. Possibly such a blessing may transcend the one which was bestowed on the day of Pentecost. But are they the same? Is there any natural, necessary connection between them? Might not that purely internal privilege have been vouchsafed, though there had never been heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind, though the Apostles

had never spoken with tongues? Did not that internal privilege belong to the holy men of the Old Testament? What would the epithet *holy men* signify, if they had it not? Why, then, are we taught to speak of Whitsuntide as if it were not merely the commemoration of a past event, but the assurance of a present power? If the power which was then exercised be really intended for the Church now, to what cause must its suspension be ascribed? May we look for its restoration, or is it indeed ours even now, if there were not a palsy over our hearts which prevents us from using it? There is one answer to the first of these questions which has always been felt to carry great weight with it. The Apostles were evidently taught to wait in Jerusalem for a *power*—a power which could qualify them for a certain *work*. No doubt they needed a pure heart for that work. But they would have needed a pure heart if they had never engaged in it, if they had passed their lives as fishermen in the Lake of Galilee. That which enabled them to become the Missionaries of the world, it is said, was a singular gift; it is expressly declared to be a gift of utterance, whereby they became intelligible to people of different races and tongues. Hence a new form has been given to the inquiry. May not this Pentecostal endowment be one specially belonging to the Christian Missionary? Can he hope to pursue his labours effectually if it be withheld? If the zeal and enterprise of

Christians in the work of Heathen conversion had not slackened, might not this promise have been fulfilled to the latest as much as to the earliest ages?

I cannot help thinking, brethren, that there is more hope of our arriving at a right determination upon this question when it thus takes a practical shape, and connects itself with the sense of a duty to be done. While we are wishing for a power to work wonders with, we are likely to mistake grievously what we want; to charge God foolishly for not giving us that which could not profit us; at last, to dream that we have found a treasure which puffs us up with vanity, and proves worthless. But when we gird up our loins to a task, believing that we are called to it, and that it cannot be safely left undone; a number of phantoms which had looked goodly or formidable at a distance vanish away; our necessities become more real and more pressing, and the promises and dispensations of God are seen to meet them in a way altogether different from that which we had conjectured previously. We find that they are not limited to the particular occasion which has enabled us to apprehend their power, but that they apply to every possible condition and emergency of man's being. Let us see if it be not so in this case.

1. The first thought of a Missionary contemplating the divisions of the globe, and hearing of their different dialects, might perhaps be, "Oh! what a barrier this of language is to all our efforts! If we could but

surmount that, if we were but provided at once with words which these people could take in, with what hope we might bear to them the message of life!" But increased reflection, I apprehend,—still more increased experience,—would greatly alter his estimate of the nature of this obstacle, as well as of the power by which it must be overcome. If the acquisition of a mere vocabulary, or a number of vocabularies, were all that he needed, the zeal which brought him to a distant land for a high object would soon triumph over that difficulty. He might at first grudge the time during which he must be silent; gradually he would rejoice in that silence, as a golden opportunity, as itself a divine gift. For he would perceive that the words he was learning, so far as they expressed merely animal wants, so far as they were used merely for purposes of barter, could not serve his ends. To discover what deeper thoughts, unknown to those who used them, or only just dimly perceived by them, were latent in their speech; to recognize the affinities between it and the tongues of men who were conscious of their human wants; to hear the cries of a spirit, as out of a dungeon-keep, coming forth in these imperfect, scarcely articulate sounds; to consider in what swaddling-clothes of habits and traditions that spirit was enveloped, and how the voice of the deliverer might make itself heard through them: this would become the Missionary's great desire and ambition. He would soon feel

that if he had the largest assortment of phrases, they would only be like the staff which Gehazi laid upon the dead child of the Shunamite. He would have to report, as the servant reported, "It is not awake." He would have to learn that if there were to be the symptoms and throbbings of life in that corpse, it could only be when, like the prophet, he had brought his lips to its lips, and had breathed his breath into it.

2. A Missionary does indeed want the power of communicating with men in the dialect wherein they were born, but that communication implies very much more than we commonly understand by the gift of tongues. It implies an actual living sympathy with the creatures to whom he addresses himself; a sympathy with all that is weak and all that is strong in them; a sympathy with them as individuals; a sympathy with their race; a sympathy which shall enable him to detect, beneath its external modes and peculiarities, what special constitution God has assigned it; a sympathy which shall enable him to feel how its specific qualities are connected with that common humanity into which he desires it should enter. Think how difficult it must be to cherish such a feeling as this, when he is seeing every moment, in those whom he desires to influence and convert, qualities with which he cannot sympathize, with which he ought not to sympathize, which he is bound to hate, —cruelty, malice, falsehood;—when he is sometimes tempted to speak of those who have the features of

men as only brutes, sometimes as nearly devils. The confessions of earnest Missionaries tell us how impossible the struggle would have been to them, if they had not been shown that there were in their own hearts the same tendencies to become brutes, the same capacity of becoming devils.

3. That awful revelation may hinder the teacher from refusing to consider his pupils as having the same nature with himself, as needing the same grace with himself. But it does not set him free from another obstruction, which he must become more conscious of, the more devoted he is to his task. He has himself been brought up in some town or village. He has been the member of some particular family. He has the habits, prejudices, temperament of the nation of which he is a citizen,—of the society in which his mind has been moulded,—of the particular teachers under whom he has studied. He has the feelings of a class, it may be of a narrow class. To throw off the impressions, the reverence, of his childhood, would always have been dangerous and wrong; he feels the necessity of them more, he clings to them with more affectionate tenacity, now that he is among strangers, among those who seem to be suffering from the want of his early associations, than he ever did before. And yet do they not, in some sense, make him stiff, unyielding, incapable of being what the Apostle of the Gentiles felt that, as a Missionary, he ought to be,—all things to all men? How shall this

difficulty be conquered? Surely, a mere gift of speaking languages would not conquer it. And yet, till it is conquered, he cannot hope to make idolaters actually hear, in their own dialect, the wonderful works of God.

4. There are other thoughts in the minds of a Missionary, besides those which concern his power of communicating with idolaters—thoughts which have reference to their idolatry itself. At first such thoughts must be very overwhelming indeed. These different worships—these different conceptions of God—do they not make the labours of the preacher quite infinite? They are all equally hostile to his message; they also make those who should listen to it unintelligible to each other. There is in them a continual tendency to multiplication. Every new appearance in Nature, every new circumstance in men's lives, may call forth a new God. There is in them a continual tendency to deterioration. The Evil Spirit, the Destroyer, more and more supplants the Giver of Good, the Creator and Preserver.

Such a view of the world and its condition is appalling; but there is another. How is it that in all these idolatries there is such a witness of some common source of good, some Deliverer, some Reconciler, some one from whom life, and not death, must come? This fact is as indisputable as the other. Theorists may try to get rid of one, or to explain it away. The practical man must recognize both. They force them-

selves separately, they force themselves together, upon his notice. Somehow or other these men must have a relation to each other, in spite of their hostilities, in spite of their different worships; somehow that relation to each other must be grounded upon a common relation to the Living God.

You say that the divided tongues of the earth are a witness of the separation between human beings. Is there not a secret affinity which discovers itself more and more to those who study them earnestly for high ends, which is as mighty a witness to the unity between human beings? You say that all the religions of the earth testify that men cannot devise for themselves a common worship, cannot agree in any conception of the Being or beings to be worshiped. True; and do not all these religions also contain a declaration that there *must* be a common worship, and that, because men cannot arrive at any satisfactory notion of Him whom they are feeling after, He must come forth and tell them what He is, and raise them above their own poor, paltry notions, and show to what each of them has been pointing?

5. A Missionary who, through much experience and suffering, has been led to the apprehension of these truths, will see, I should think, a way through some of those difficulties to which I have alluded, and will find something very different in Whitsuntide from what we are wont to find in it. If he studies the records of the Apostles' acts and thoughts in St.

Luke's narrative, or in their own letters, he will be startled by the absence of all evidence in favour of that opinion respecting the gift of tongues which has been so prevalent in the Church; by the number of passages which directly impugn it. He would perceive in the record itself no intimation that the gift to the Apostles was the gift of a certain number of words which they might use in teaching the nations. It would seem that St. Paul seldom, if ever, used any medium of communication, either in speaking or writing, besides Greek, except when he was addressing the citizens of Jerusalem. It would seem, from the Fourteenth Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that the gift, so far from *necessarily* involving the communication of intelligence to others, might be merely intelligible to him on whom it was bestowed. On that ground St. Paul *contrasts* it with prophecy.

Hence we are driven to accept St. Paul's own explanation,—to adhere strictly to the letter of that explanation. He describes it as a *sign*,—a sign of something very important and precious; though not in itself, in any sense, the important or precious thing.

6. What then is the *significatum?* What is the truth to which this gift was the index, of which it was the pledge? Consider the narrative in the Second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and see whether it does not tell us. A great Feast is held in the city of

Jerusalem. It has been celebrated there for centuries. It speaks of a blessing renewed each year,—of a continuous blessing. That wonderful mystery of seeds lying hid in the earth, and springing up in a form altogether unlike their own,—springing up to give bread to the eater, and fresh seed to the sower,—is commemorated on that day. It affirms that the Author of this strange life in natural things is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. This same Pentecost, so we are told, reminded the Israelites that they were under a Law which was given to their nation on that day when the Lord God descended amidst thunders and lightnings on Sinai, and declared that it was He who brought them out of the house of bondage. Therefore, Jews from all provinces of the Empire to which they had emigrated, or in which they had been born, came up to keep this Festival. It was the pledge that they were members of one race; that the same Creator fed them with daily bread who fed their fathers with manna in the wilderness; that the same King ruled over them who had given their fathers their law and their covenant. Besides all other ties, they had the tie of a common language, though every Jew would of course ordinarily speak the dialect of the country wherein he dwelt.

And now came those events which were to turn the special into the universal feast. On a set of poor men,—trained to a mechanical calling,—despised by their countrymen,—but sharing their contempt for

other nations,—noted for an uncouth dialect,—there light cloven tongues as of fire. They have new powers of utterance. Men from the provinces of the Parthian, as well as the Roman world, hear them proclaiming the wonderful works of God in the languages of the lands where they have grown up. What does it mean? Is it a drunken inspiration? Have the orgies of a Dionysiac feast been brought into the Jerusalem worship? No, say the Galileans, we are the disciples and witnesses of One Whom your rulers crucified, Whom God has raised from the dead. A great and terrible day of the Lord is at hand. To prepare for such a day, to signify that He whom you rejected as your King is both Lord and Christ, that is poured forth which you see and hear. Repent therefore; acknowledge your true King and Lord; be baptized in His name, and you shall receive that gift of the Holy Ghost which we have received. *For the promise is unto us and to our children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Then three thousand are baptized. In the sect-ridden city of Jerusalem there arises a Society united in the name of the Son of David and the Son of God, the nucleus of a Society for all tribes and nations.

7. I will not stop to consider how the double meaning of the Pentecost was fulfilled and translated by this revelation of God as the Giver of life, not to seeds, but to men,—as writing those laws in their hearts which He had given on the Mount. I would

fix your thoughts upon the sign itself. Cannot the Missionary who has felt the necessity of some words which shall reach not the ears, but the hearts of men,—of some power which shall carry those words to spirits that are needing life,—which can speak to the common humanity that is latent beneath the customs and tongues of different tribes,—which can enable the teacher to bear with their sins,—to believe that Christ is with them as well as sin,—which can enable him to break through the fetters of his narrow education, and become all things to all men; who has learned that the relations between men must be grounded on a common relation to God; who has been sure that only God can reveal that relation; who has half perceived that a revelation of it must in the highest sense be a revelation of God Himself as the ground and object of worship;—cannot he interpret these signs? Do not they interpret themselves to him? Could any others tell him the things which must be, and which he longed to perceive? Could any others tell him how *his* stammering lips may be opened, and *he* may speak out plainly to all men the wonderful works of God?

8. For surely, if this be the simplest and most natural reading of the Scripture narrative, the question is settled, whether the gift is for a certain age, or for all ages. A particular instrument or machinery for the conversion of the nations may be bestowed and withdrawn. But how can a Law be established in one

period, reversed in another? Can a discovery of God's own operation—of God's eternal Nature—be a discovery for the first century, not for the nineteenth? If St. Paul is right, the gift of the Spirit was a revelation of that which had been hidden from ages and generations,—of the common fellowship of Gentile and Jew in Christ, of His glorification of our nature at the right-hand of God. Is not the Missionary to the Caffre and the Hindoo as much bound to say, as the Missionary to the Greek of Corinth and Ephesus, "I have no power to speak a single word of life to any human creature. It is God's Spirit who alone speaks that word. No schemes, doctrines, systems of men can unite any nations together. God has united them in His Son. God does bind them together by His Spirit. Schemes and systems do but build up new barriers between men, because they set up new and contradictory conceptions of God. The Spirit of God, teaching of the Father and the Son, leading men out of their narrow notions, can alone guide them into all truth"?

Yes, brethren, the Missionary, if he is seeking to do his work faithfully, will be brought to this conclusion; will be brought to confess that God's words are not deceitful words, but words proved in the fire; not words for one age, but words that will last if heaven and earth pass away. But he will come to that discovery because it is the human discovery,—the divine discovery—which each of us will make for him-

self, if we each seek to be honest in our vocations. We too must be brought to confess that our words are not our own; that they will become mischievous, accursed words, if we treat them as our own. We too must learn that the Spirit of God unites us to each other, that we should be everlastingly at war if He were not uniting us. We too must own that that Spirit is not given to any one of us for any faith or virtues of his own; that it is God's gift to Christ, the Head and Corner-Stone of a Society which we enter when we abandon our separate selfish pretensions, and are content to be heirs of a common blessing.

9. So we can resolve the two difficulties of which I spoke at the beginning of my sermon. *Holy men spoke in old times as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* They could have no other mover, no other inspirer, if they said any right word, if they did any right act. But *the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* It had not yet been declared that He is moving at the heart of humanity, that all nations have a common fellowship in Him. God had been revealed in His awful *distinctness* from man; the idolatry which would mould gods out of human conceptions had been denounced. He had not yet been fully revealed in His *union* with men. The only begotten Son, though he had always declared the Father, had not yet taken the flesh of man; had not said in that flesh, "*He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;*" had not poured out His

soul and body to death; had not raised His soul and body out of death; had not ascended on high, leading captivity captive, proving Himself the Priest and King of the universe. Therefore the Holy Ghost could not yet claim men as His temples; therefore He could not raise up a Church out of the one nation as a witness to all nations. Therefore the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the one God blessed for ever, could not be fully manifested as the ground of a fellowship for all tribes and people and tongues.

The other difficulty was this. Does not the gift of tongues—and therefore that gift of which it was the sign—appear to have been practically withdrawn from us, in spite of God's promise that all should inherit it? Yes, brethren! if Christian men love lies—if they think lies may help forward their Christianity—the Spirit of Truth must seem as if it had left the Church. If Christian men love parties, and maintain parties to be essential to Christianity, the Spirit of Unity must seem as if He had left the Church. The Spirit who spoke by the Prophets appeared utterly to have deserted the people of Jerusalem, when they gave themselves over to the falsehoods against which Prophets lived and died to testify. The Spirit who had kept Israelites at one, appeared utterly to have forsaken the citizens of Jerusalem, when they became banded together in parties. And it was not a mistake—the Apostles on the day of Pentecost declared it to be awfully true—that the lying sectarian generation,

which had refused Him who alone could bind it together, would be left to the curse it had chosen. But they signified at the same time by act and by word that the Spirit, instead of having forsaken mankind, was vouchsafing such proofs of His presence with mankind as had never been known before.

Thus we must believe it will be with those who have succeeded to more than Jewish privileges. So far as we choose lies, so far as we link ourselves to parties, so far *we* shall be left to the spirit of lies and division. But God's oath will not fail. The text will be established to its very letter. To *us* the Spirit speaks, though we grieve Him with our lies and our hatred. He proves His presence by the misery, the helplessness, the shame which those lies and those hatreds produce. We have sown the wind for *our children;* we often predict that they will reap a whirlwind of superstition or infidelity. But through that whirlwind God will bring out the blessing which we have refused. In the destruction and overthrow of sects and parties our children may be blessed with the revelation of the one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, of whom the Spirit has been through all ages testifying. And those who *are afar off*—the serfs of our own soil, Jews, Turks, Hindoos —will become part of the one fold under that One Shepherd whom the Father loves, because He laid down His life for the sheep, that they might be endued, once and for ever, with His living Spirit.

Trinity Sunday.

May 30, 1858.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 19, 20.

"GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN."

'WHY, it has often been asked by men of great abi-'lity and benevolence, of reverent and not captious 'minds,—why did the Early Church dwell so much 'upon mysteries concerning the Name and Nature of 'God? Why, above all, did it make these mysteries 'the bonds of communion between its members? Was 'it not a strange departure from the right and natural 'order of Christian education, to begin with those 'difficult problems which it is scarcely supposed that 'a few of the most initiated ever really master? Was 'it not a breach of all charity, to take certain expres-'sions which only one here and there can pronounce 'without some inaccuracy or stammering, as shibbo-'leths for the Church in all nations? Would not the 'Sermon on the Mount, with its heavenly morality;

'would not the life and example of Jesus Christ, have 'been an easier yoke, a lighter burden for the disciples 'young or old? Might they not have been the links 'of a far more comprehensive fellowship?'

Many take the answers to these questions almost for granted. They suppose it is clear that the old Church did not think of charity or comprehension at all; that its object was to discover the terms on which its corporation could be made most close and exclusive. And since that most undoubtedly ought not to be, and perhaps cannot be, *our* object, they conclude that the ancient methods must be altogether unsuitable for us. In general, the defenders of our symbols are not much disposed to dispute these premises, they demur only to the inferences. They say that the men of the first centuries were undoubtedly zealous above all things for Truth; to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the saints was their function. They therefore could tolerate none of those compromises which we justify on the plea of promoting concord. Their wisdom, it is alleged, was "first pure:" when that quality was secured, and not till then, "peaceable." And if, it is added, these old men would have been better for a little of our charity to soften their eagerness on behalf of nice distinctions, we have far more need of their unflinching determination and logical severity to counteract our tenderness and looseness. I would ask both these parties to reflect for an instant on the passage which the Church takes

for its Epistle next Sunday, before they rest in the assurance that they have sounded the bottom of this question, and have ascertained what was the leading thought in the minds of those who proclaimed the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost most passionately and perseveringly. It would certainly appear as if the lessons, "*God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God;*" "*Whosoever saith that he loveth God and hateth his brother, is a liar,*" were those which the compilers of the ancient Services whence ours are derived did most naturally associate with the mystery which is set before us today, however they might forget those same lessons when they had power to enforce the doctrine of the Trinity by decrees and excommunications. If there were only this evidence, I could not esteem it as slight. For an act of worship expresses the inmost mind of a man far more than his utterances in moments of passion and controversy. When that act is connected with a method and scheme of devotion, it acquires a still higher significance. And when it is adopted to be the united utterance of a whole society, not once, but statedly and successively, that society gives as great a witness, as distinct a pledge as we can imagine of its convictions and its principles. And therefore it is impossible that this instance can be a solitary or a peculiar one. Let it be remembered that the writer in the New Testament to whom all believers in the Trinity refer as *the* unfolder of that mystery is the

writer from whom these passages are taken, and the character and purpose of whose life they are felt to reveal. Neither in the early ages, nor, I believe, in the middle ages, were those two aspects of St. John's writings ever contemplated apart from each other. The Churchmen might themselves persecute cruelly, but they never doubted that *he* was declaring the name of the God of Infinite Charity, when he declared the name into which we are baptized.

But there is another way of examining the subject. Leaving St. John, and what is sometimes called his transcendental lore, we may consider those earlier Evangelists, from whom, according to some modern authorities, the fourth Gospel departs so widely. We may inquire what St. Matthew has to say of the message with which the Apostles were entrusted. That message is closely connected with a belief in the Trinity. If it is a narrow one, that belief may be reasonably charged with drawing lines which excluded different forms of thought and opinion, and therefore a number of true and earnest spirits, from the fold of Christ.

I. St. Matthew tells us that after His resurrection Jesus stood upon a mountain in Galilee, and spake these words to His disciples: "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*" I purposely exclude the sentence which introduces this

command. I wish you only to remember that a set of Galilean fishermen were bidden to teach or make disciples of all nations. I wish you to remember that in some way or other these Galileans did make disciples among Jews, the worshipers of the I AM, the Jehovah; among Greeks, the worshipers of human heroes and the forms of nature. I will go no further. I will dwell upon no traditions respecting the journeys of them and their followers into more distant lands. Only consider what was necessary to bring these two portions of the world into a common fellowship.

Christians of our day sometimes undertake to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was a far more perfect and Divine Teacher than Socrates, than Confucius, than Zoroaster. If they can establish this point, they think they are making disciples of men who reverence these reformers. You will see at once how impossible it was that the fishermen of Galilee could have engaged in any such task as this. They knew nothing of the Greek or the Chinese or the Persian wisdom. They could institute no comparisons between it and what they had received from their own Master. And if they could, what would they have effected? The nations believed in certain gods. To these they referred any blessings, any civilization they had received. It was the punishments and curses which these could inflict that they dreaded. What was there in the announcement of a great, benevolent, supernaturally illustrious teacher, to displace these convic-

tions, to abate these fears? Throw in what miraculous powers you please to aid them in their work, let them speak with ever so many tongues, let them be able to work ever so many marvellous cures, still if these only demonstrated the greatness of a certain Man who had been born and had died in Judæa, how could they supplant this faith in Divine beings? how could they bring these different fragments of faith into a whole?

II. But these Galileans could not possibly attach this sense to the word "make disciples," because it was altogether foreign from their own experience. When Jesus had said to them, "*Follow me*," "Become my disciples," He had spoken to them of the Kingdom of Heaven; He had taught them the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; He had bidden them go and tell their countrymen, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. By degrees they learnt to enter into the force of these words. They found that He was revealing to them a strange world within themselves; that He was explaining, by the processes of the natural world with which they were most familiar, what processes God was carrying on in their hearts; that He was showing them, through the most ordinary human relations, in what relation they stood to Him and to His Father. They found that in every discourse, whether to them or to the multitude, He spoke of this Father, He said He had come into the world that they might see His Image and know His Will, that they might

be formed in His Image and conformed to His Will. They found that He intended them to be His ministers in preaching His Father's Kingdom to men; in manifesting the nature of it; in proving how much mightier it was than all powers of evil and discord, by healing sickness and casting out devils. If they were to be Christ's disciples, how could they suppose that they should make all nations His disciples by merely setting Him forth as a greater, wiser, holier prophet than any that had come before Him? How could they do anything for the good of men, anything to bind the nations into one, unless they could bring them a Gospel concerning God, unless they could declare broadly and simply Who He was of Whom they had been dreaming, Whom they had been seeking for, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him; Who had never been far from any one of them; Who, through all their crude conceptions, had been making Himself known in their consciences, Whom all their idolatries had not been able to hide or to banish from them?

III. Those words which He spoke as He stood on the Mount (those which I passed over), "*All power is given to me in heaven and earth,*" were indeed most necessary before they could believe that power would descend on them to execute such a command. Only if He had reconciled earth and heaven, only if He had conquered the visible as well as the invisible world, only if both were gathered up in Him,

could they have the credentials or the inner might which were needed for heralds to the Nations. "Go ye *therefore*," was the natural sequence to this assurance. But it was not enough. They were messengers from God to men, as he was, who had seen the vision in the burning Mount. They were messengers, as he was, to a sense-bound, earth-bound race, that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had seen their affliction and had heard their cry, and was going to deliver them. But they had as much necessity to ask as Moses had, "Behold, when we come unto them and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent us unto you, and they shall say to us, What is His Name? what shall we say unto them?" The answer was given before the question had arisen—"*Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

IV. The Name, the new and awful Name, was proclaimed. But it was not merely proclaimed. The Nations were not merely to be told, "It is this Being whom henceforth you are to worship; to this Name, the names of the Delphic Apollo and the Jove of the Capitol must bow." Go ye, it was said, and baptize all nations into this Name. Speak not of it as if it stood aloof from them, as if it were afar off them. This mystery is about them, embracing them, sustaining them. This is the Being out of Whose presence they cannot go,—Who, if they ascend into

Heaven, is there,—if they make their bed in Hell, is there. In all their speculations, they have been beholding somewhere, projected to a distance from them, the vision of an awful Father and of a tender Brother. The sense of an Inspirer from whom all their thoughts and desires have come, has mingled with these visions and disturbed them. Each has crossed the other, and obscured it. Each has caught the colours of earth, till it has seemed to be only a mist drawn up from earth. Neither could subsist without the other; neither had any worth except as it was found to be no shadow cast from the worshiper, but the substance from which all the shadows that he pursues were cast. Let the Name be heard, but do not bring your paltry proofs to sustain the proclamation. It will sustain itself. You can trust God to make His creatures know that which He desires they should know. Be assured, all they have expressed in their mythologies, all they have been unable to express, all the wonders of creation, all the wonders within themselves, will be His hornbook. Only let your light shine forth before those whom you teach; only show that you come to claim them as your Father's children, as the brethren of His Son, as the inheritors of the One Spirit; only hold forth the simple sign He has ordained, that He owns them and adopts them as sons, that He seals them with His Spirit; only believe, and tell them to believe, that He writes upon them His own Name, and the

name of the City of their God,—that He makes them freemen of the New Jerusalem, fellow-heirs with His saints that have been and that shall be, and then see whether the idol-thrones do not fall; whether the Nations are able to uphold their separate gods any longer, whether all the pale names do not shrink and dwindle before the perfect light which God has kindled in the dome of this dark world,—not for the wise, but for the poor, the ignorant, for those thatare out of the way.

V. I think, my brethren, the more we study this history, the more we shall be convinced that the preaching of this Name and the Baptism into this Name were the mighty powers by which the divided worship, the demon-worship, of the old world was overthrown. And this, because it was felt that there was one inclusive Truth revealed to mankind, a Truth which we cannot comprehend, but which comprehends us; a living Truth, which speaks itself out in a Person, not in a proposition; a Truth into which we must be received, and which then will go with us through life and death, meeting us in every new stage of our education, interpreting itself to us by our own individual trials, and by all the trials through which the world, or any section of it, is appointed to pass, bringing within its circle the sage and the little child.

For here is one of the signs and tests of its power. Naturally the Church would have been disposed, and

we know was disposed, to restrict Baptism to those who could understand the Gospel which was preached to them; could intelligently abjure idols, and repent consciously of sin; could enter into the teaching respecting Christ and the Father, which the Catechist imparted to them. But, by a force greater than that of any doctor, or of all the doctors in Christendom, a force which they could not account for, but to which they must yield, the doctrine established itself in all directions that the infant must also be signed with this Name. No greater triumph, I think, was ever won than this for mankind, over the prejudices of those who were the appointed heralds of God's Revelation to it. If our confession and acceptance of that Revelation is once made the primary condition of our entering into God's Family, the very idea of a Father is lost, and the Son and the Spirit are always in danger of being regarded merely as objects of our reverence. The Name becomes the one which distinguishes Christians, or certain Christians, from other people, not the Name which underlies and bears up the universe.

VI. To substitute for such a Name the most beautiful precepts or the divinest example, is to deprive these precepts of their living force, of their relation to humanity; it is to make the example something wholly external to us, which we may admire, but which we shall only make the most abortive attempts to imitate. When our Lord had told the disciples that they were to go forth making disciples of all Nations,

and baptizing them into His Name, then He added, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The very highest, apparently the most hopeless commands of the Sermon on the Mount, become possible,—the most amazing promises of it are brought within the reach of the wayfarer and the sinner,—when once he knows that the Father, whom he is to be like, has taken him into fellowship with Him; that the Son, in whom dwelt the perfect obedience, has made him a partaker of His nature; that the Spirit is with him, to create the purity of spirit, to which the Kingdom of Heaven belongs—the hunger and thirst after righteousness, which will assuredly be satisfied. The more we know of our own selfish instincts, and whither they would lead us, the more desperate, and often scornful, we feel about any maxims of morality. They are very fine; we can talk of them and repeat them; but to follow them is another matter. But the assurance, "You are grafted on a new stock; those selfish impulses are not the laws of your life; you are in Christ new creatures; the name of the Trinity is upon you;"—this restores to morality its proper sense and vital energy. We feel and confess that, when we are not observing all things which Christ has commanded, it is not because we have been walking in the track into which we have been put, but because we have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep.

VII. Yes, brethren, for Christ adds, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world. The things

which I commanded you, when I was standing on the Mount, when I was sitting with you in the ship, are the things which I am commanding now; which I have been commanding since the world began; which I shall go on to command when your work is over on earth and I have called you home. Lo! I am with you; the Lord and King of your spirits, as much as I ever was; the bond between you and God, as I ever have been; the bond between you and all the men to whom you shall go preaching and baptizing, as I have ever been. You go to claim their homage not for a Prophet or King or Priest that lived once, but for a Prophet and a King and a Priest who was dead and is alive, and who liveth for evermore. You go to proclaim, not a religion of yours, not a master of yours, but the Son of Man and the Son of God. You go in the faith that He has been manifested to destroy the works of the Devil; all division, strife, hatred, all false worship; whatever rends the world asunder, whatever makes it unfit for the habitation of the Eternal God. You go among men who will have each his gentile name, that which unites him to a family on earth, that which recalls to him the images of his forefathers. You go to put on them a *Christian* name, which shall remind them that they are brothers of a whole family in Heaven as well as in earth. You go therefore to lay the foundation of a city which lieth four-square, the length as large as the breadth, a city of pure gold, like unto clear glass."

VIII. The foundation of that city has been laid, brethren; every nation of baptized men has confessed it, and brought its glory and honour into it. But this city has set itself up as a rival to the nations of the earth, instead of being their teacher, instead of making them the disciples of the Son of God. It has glorified *its* name,—not the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Therefore has there come all that contention and narrowness and hardness of heart into the Church, which has caused this Name to be evil spoken of, and which has made men wish that they could cast it off from them. Therefore has that which is the very expression of all unity, which recognizes and harmonizes all partial conceptions, which is the spring of all free and practical life, been slandered as the cause of separation,—the mere contradiction of all that men had thought before it has been revealed to them,—the driest and most contracted of school theories. But Christ is with us always, even to the end of the age. However His ministers have misunderstood His commission, however they have turned it to the curse of those whom they were sent to bless, He has been present in all generations, turning the confusions of the world and the sins of the Church into means of manifesting the glory of the Divine Name. The Church would have kept the nations down; would have made its own universality the excuse for denying their distinct callings, the blessed work which He has given them

to do. He has punished the Church sorely for this oppression,—punished it by worse than outward calamities, by leaving it to the pride, sensuality, worldliness, into which it must fall, when it usurps powers which do not belong to it, and when it forgets its true Lord in some visible substitute for Him. Christ has called the nations to vindicate the moral and intellectual freedom without which they cannot worship Him. The Church in those nations has lost sight of the universality which appertains to it, and without which it cannot be a herald to all people. Christ has punished it by allowing sectarianism and divisions to creep into all corners of it; so that the unity of the nations is as much shaken as its own deeper and more comprehensive unity. But at the same time He has awakened sighs and cries for that larger and more embracing fellowship, which men often seek to satisfy by taking refuge in a closer atmosphere than that which they find it hard to breathe in. Only let them believe that He has not broken His promise, that He is with them still, and He will show by degrees that the name which was put upon them at the first gives them that catholicity, that freedom of the universe, which they can find in nothing else. They will find that it throws down no national altar on which we have asked strength and freedom and victory for our land; that it hallows the family altar on which we have worshiped the God of our Fathers. For the name of the God of Abraham and Isaac, the name of the Jehovah, is not lost in the name of the

Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; the perfect and universal revelation explains all the gradual discoveries that were leading to it, and shows how each connected itself with some permanent portion of human society and of man's inner being. And that perfect revelation will be proved at last to be indeed what an ecclesiastical system, what philosophical liberalism, has tried to be and failed, the assertion of a humanity in which all races are equally partakers. The Church which is to be will not be another than that which grew up under the authority of this commission, and has stood ever since in different lands, in different degrees of strength and feebleness, of sincerity and corruption. She will only have learned, through hard suffering, the foundation which she has forgotten, the work which she has neglected. She will cast off whatever wood, hay, or stubble, even whatever gold or precious stones, have hidden that foundation from us. She will be purged of whatever loveth and maketh a lie, that she may understand she is the witness of Truth to all nations. In them she may consecrate temples to hallow their civil order and life; she may pour her oil upon the king and the priest. But in herself,—in that universal city, the New Jerusalem,—writes St. John, "I saw no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

First Sunday after Trinity.

June 6, 1858.

GALATIANS VI. 15.

"FOR IN CHRIST JESUS NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANYTHING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BUT A NEW CREATURE."

WHEN you first read this sentence, you are inclined perhaps to think that there is something awkward or unusual in the construction of it. Why should St. Paul say, "*in Jesus Christ*"?—why not, "*in the Christian religion*,"—"*in the Christian community*," or, at all events, "*among us, the true disciples of Jesus Christ*"? Would not either one of these forms of expression have conveyed the sense of the Apostle much more simply?

Commentators have thought so, and they have seldom scrupled to substitute some paraphrase of this kind for the actual words. Let us see what they have gained by the change.

"*In the Christian religion* neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." That means, I suppose, that it made no difference to the doctrines or practice of Christianity, whether those who embraced it were circumcised or uncircumcised. But

history does not bear out this assertion at all. The doctrines and practice of Christians were affected very greatly by their previous conceptions and habits of life. One can trace the influence of Jewish notions and of Gentile notions in all the opposing heresies of the early age, perhaps in all the heresies of every age.—Or "in the Christian *communities* neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." What! could St. Paul tell the Galatians this, at the end of a letter the whole object of which had been to show that notions about circumcision and uncircumcision had availed to rend asunder an infant Church, even to subvert its faith? — Or "among us, the Apostles, they avail nothing." But they did avail very much among the Apostles; and what is more, we have St. Paul's authority for saying that they were meant to avail, that they availed through God's own command. Peter, he says, has been sent to the Circumcision, I to the Uncircumcision. They were to present, and they did present, the Gospel of the Son of God to the different wants and feelings of Jews and Greeks; they often followed a different course of conduct, precisely because they had the same Gospel, and were bound to show that it was intended for men brought up in the most various circumstances and opinions.

If then we are to assert the fact broadly, as St. Paul does, "*Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision,*" we cannot resort to any of these para-

phrases. Nay, we cannot help out their weakness by introducing an *ought*,—by saying, "they *ought* not to avail anything among us." For we have discovered at least one important and wide-spreading exception to that proposition. That exception involves a principle, perhaps the very principle which the Galatians had been forgetting. If they had understood why St. Peter had one work and St. Paul another, they would not have supposed that it was necessary for heathens to become Jews that they might become Christians. We must go back therefore to the old words; we must be content to learn patiently what he intends by saying that in *Christ Jesus* neither circumcision availeth, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, instead of subjecting his thoughts to an attenuating and exhausting process of ours.

I. St. Paul was a proof that, in one sense of the words, *circumcision availed much*. It was the sign that a Nation was separated by God to be the witness of Him to the world. It was a sign that the fleshly nature led men to be idolaters and slaves. St. Paul had learned both lessons, and was practising them. He had gone forth a witness of the God of Abraham to the nations. He was turning them from dumb idols to serve the Living God. He was affirming that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelt no good thing. He went forth as a conqueror for his land, asserting the exclusive authority of its King more than Joshua or David had ever done. And he vindicated the truth

of the history of his own nation, by showing how it helped to explain the history of all nations. Each one had a calling from God, each one had in its national laws and institutions a testimony in behalf of a righteous, living, and true God; each one had in these institutions and laws a testimony against divided and evil and visible Gods. In this sense then it might be said that both circumcision and uncircumcision had a meaning and a worth. It was not an accident but a Divine ordinance that one man was born in Athens, another in Rome, another in Jerusalem; that one man grew up with recollections of Marathon, another under the shadow of the Capitol, another in sight of Mount Zion. Those who believe that there is one Lord over the whole earth, must believe that He ordered the times before appointed and the bounds of men's habitation; they must believe that He was fulfilling the purpose for which He separated the Sons of Jacob, by all the acts of His government over every other people.

II. There were many facts at this time which may have led Gentiles to covet the privilege of being admitted within the pale of the circumcised nation, and Jews to wish that they could escape from it, and surround themselves with Roman or Greek feelings and traditions. I omit the mere restlessness which tempts unthinking people to long for a change of circumstances, to fancy that the evils which they know not of must be less than those which they are ex-

periencing. I speak of the Gentiles who were most earnest in thought and feeling, and had struggled most to realize the truths which were hid beneath their country's superstitions, to separate the wheat from the chaff. Only consider what an attraction the words of some zealous Pharisee, who told of the simplicity of Jewish worship, of the homage which a whole nation had paid for so many ages to One of Whom they dared to form no likeness,—of the forms and traditions by which they were preserved from confusing this worship with that of the people round about,—of the Sacred Books which had been delivered to them with such watchful care by their ancestors; —only consider what attraction such words may have had for some Persian votary of light, for some Greek who had learnt through the philosophers to distrust his country's fables without obtaining any substitute for them, for some Roman who had been bred up to feel that he must have an object to adore, and whose sincerity was shocked every hour of the day by the tricks and lies of augurs and priests. Can you wonder that numbers should have been made proselytes by this pharisaical teaching?

And yet One Who knew, and could not speak falsely, said, "*Woe unto you, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves.*" The convert had oftentimes painfully to discover that he did not gain what he expected to gain;

that there was no charm in the worship, the traditions, even the Sacred Books, to keep him from evil, to raise him from death to life; that he might be an idolater in the temple of Jehovah; nay, that the Being he worshiped might be turned into a more concentrated form of evil and falsehood than those which he had abandoned.

On the other hand, how naturally might a Jew who noticed this fact,—or the fearful moral degradation of his countrymen generally, or the low, self-seeking habits of their religious leaders, or the utter contrast between the world around him and what he read of in the Holy Writings,—be led to doubt whether the restraints of his national position were not curses rather than blessings, whether they did not keep him from fellowship with other men, and make him uncharitable towards them, without raising him at all to a higher level than they had attained. How would a man into whose mind such thoughts had once entered, be struck with the cultivation of the Greek cities, with the various fields of speculation which Greeks had traversed if not conquered, and which a Jew seemed forbidden to enter. How must the triumphs of a people so much younger than his own, as the Romans were, have dazzled his imagination; how easily may they have seemed to him God's own authentic declaration that another city was to have the honours and the eternity which in his childhood he had attributed to the city of David. If we

suppose, and it is probably no mere supposition, that many a Jew was led by considerations of this kind gradually to forget, if not suddenly to throw off, the habits and faith of his home, and to become identified with the customs and idolatries of other nations, we do not want evidence to convince us what bitterness there will have been against those whom he had left, what fervour for a time in his zeal for that which he had adopted, yet what secret pain and alienation, what continual efforts to make himself easy in his new position, what inward discontent with the world which at a distance looked so promising, what a perpetually increasing consciousness that he could not be a heathen, though he had ceased to be a Jew.

To what did each of these experiences point? They pointed to the same truth to which all the history of Jews and Gentiles had been pointing, to which the decay and hopelessness of both at this crisis were pointing. They must have been ordained, as all that history was ordained, as the weakness and helplessness themselves were ordained, to show men that unless there were some spring of life near to them which they had lost sight of or had not yet discovered, all institutions, all forms of discipline, all traditions, all philosophies, all schemes of life and government, all protests against idolatry, would be helpless to raise them, would be unable to prevent them from sinking lower and lower. What St. Paul

went about preaching among Jews and Gentiles was, that such a spring of life did lie near to them both, that it had been revealed, that its fountain was in God Himself, that the heart of every man was created to receive it and be nourished by it, that nothing else could renew individual men or renew society. In Jesus Christ the Son of God, he proclaimed, there is life for Jew and for Gentile. He is the ground of human fellowship, the ground of righteousness and wisdom and power to each man. He has come into the world to claim us as members of His body, as children of God in Him; He has come to infuse into the worn-out, lifeless carcase of Judaism, into the scattered fragments of Heathenism, a quickening, uniting Spirit. That which you have not in circumcision you have in Him of Whom it was meant to teach you; that which you have not in uncircumcision, in all your Gentile habits and traditions, you have in Him of Whom they too are bearing witness. He is the living root of humanity, whence all its energies are derived, apart from which it is a name and not a reality, a mere fictitious expression for a number of loose disjointed atoms; in Him the different lines of the history of the human race find their meeting-point, for from Him they began; in Him the discipline of each man and of each nation finds its purpose and its interpretation; in Him circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

III. I have already intimated what I conceive to be the force of these last words, and I shall not go at length into some of the questions which they have suggested. It has been asked, "Does the Apostle mean by κτίσις a new individual creature, as our translators seem to suppose, or a new creation? Is he speaking of the effects of His coming, upon a given Jew or a given Gentile, or upon the whole mass of humanity, nay, upon the whole universe of God?" If there is one of these meanings in the word, I believe there must be the other. I do not think it is in our power to separate them. He who can be and is the renewer of any one individual man, can be and is the only renewer of the race, the only regenerator of human society. What Nathanael, the strict Jew, wanted, as he prayed under his fig-tree, was to find the Son of God and the King of Israel. This was He Whom he required to satisfy the inmost cravings and sorrows of his own heart. What Cornelius, the Roman centurion, needed, as he fasted and prayed unto the ninth hour, was the revelation of the same Son of God and King of Men, to restore that which was decayed and dead in himself, and that which was decayed and dead in the mighty Empire to which he belonged. No forms or institutions can renew a man; he must find the ground upon which the forms and institutions stand. No forms or institutions can renew a society; it must feel its way to the living ground upon which they stand, and from which their

worth and strength is derived. Both individual men and societies are always sighing for something new, and going hither and thither to obtain it. Both men and societies are always crying for that which is old; yes, enduring abuses and corruptions in order to retain it. Each instinct is a true one. They want to be made new by digging down to the deepest and oldest root; thence comes the renovation and purification which they could not find on the surface; there is the everlasting stability which walls and battlements cannot give.

St. Paul wrote to men who had confessed Christ the Son of God to be the Living Vine of which they were the branches; who had understood, by entering into the Church and being baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, that they were confessing themselves to be members of His body; who had proclaimed this to be a true confession for themselves and for all men, Jews as well as Gentiles, seeing that they invited all to make it. "And therefore," he says, "you ought to know, your profession obliges you to know, that you are a new creation in Christ Jesus, that you belong to a body which He has regenerated, that you are yourselves regenerated. This, you ought to know, is your glory. You have, and can have, no other. It is denying the privilege of your baptism to say that circumcision has any power, or uncircumcision has any power. It is all one with saying, We do not think that Christ has

come into the world to make us Sons of God in Him; we think this is yet to be done by some other power which is not His power; or we think that there is some better or higher state than this, to which He has not raised us, but to which some outward institution or form may raise us." Hereby you perceive that, while he set at naught the pretensions of the Judaizers, who told baptized Gentiles that they must be circumcised, he did not in the least deny the privilege or advantage of the Jew, or wish him to scorn the schoolmaster who had brought him to Christ; that he did not encourage him in throwing aside any part of the discipline which belonged to his personal life and to the history of his nation. You will perceive, on the other hand, that while he set at naught the pretensions of the Gentile to incorporate the notions and habits of his previous life with his belief in the great Reconciler, the one Lord and King of Men, he did not in the least deny that his education had a worth of its own, that God had made use of it, that His servants were to make use of it and were to recognize His hand in it. St. Peter had a right to go to the Circumcision, and to act in all respects as a rigorous Jew; *he* had a right to become as without law to the Gentile, for this very reason, that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

IV. It might seem, my brethren, as if this Epistle to the Galatians, since it turns so expressly upon the

relations between the two bodies which composed the infant Church, ought to be interpreted solely by reference to its circumstances. So far as I have been able, I have taken this course. I have tried to look at the condition of Jews and Gentiles as it was when the letter was written, and to ascertain from that condition the force of the Apostle's words. I have not wilfully gone aside from the strict force of them for the sake of connecting them with later times. But I could not limit them to the Apostolical age, if I tried ever so much to do so. The more I spoke of what seemed peculiar and temporary, the more I was obliged to introduce that which was universal and permanent. The head of a religion, the chief of a society, the founder of a set of institutions, may be great through one or many generations, and then may sink into nothingness. Whatever depends for its reality upon human faith must be exposed to all the accidents and fluctuations of that faith. But if Jesus Christ was the root and ground of human society in the days of Claudius and Nero, He is the root and ground of human society now. Nothing in the circumstances of the enfeebled, exhausted, faith-deserted age to which He was first proclaimed can give it any superiority over ours, can constitute any difference between it and ours.

I have a right therefore to apply the Apostle's doctrine to ourselves. The difficulty is not to find cases which fall within the range of it, but not to be over-

whelmed by the multitude of them. I will allude to one—by no means the most interesting and important,—because it is suggested by the very words of the text, and because it is occupying Englishmen at this moment. Our countrymen have been for many years considering in what political relation they stand to the countrymen of St. Paul, who, without being a nation, have preserved through so many ages the tokens of nationality,—who, dwelling amidst the other peoples of the earth, are as distinct from them as they were when they had a city and temple of their own. We have asked ourselves whether it is or it is not a duty to exclude them from some of our civil privileges, at least from any share in our government. Many persons, no less wise than excellent, have said that this exclusion is the very sign and badge of our Christianity, so that, if it cease, we shall treat the rejection of Jesus by the Jews in the first age, and His rejection by their descendants ever since, as a light error, which, with our enlightenment, we can afford to overlook. And secondly, they say that while we thus efface the distinction between us and the Jew,—while we make nothing of our New Covenant,—we lose the special blessing which we have inherited from the Old, we lead the Jew to suppose that our God is not a God Who cares for nations and punishes them, as the God of his fathers did; we may retain, they say, our individual faith, but England we shall permit to be as atheistic as

France was. Such, these critics add with indignation, is the result to which the worship of expediency by statesmen, and the indifference of Churchmen, are bringing us.

Were these to be the consequences of the removal of Jewish disabilities, which is now to all appearance close at hand, I conceive no denunciation of that measure could be too loud, no warnings too terrible. For we need, it seems to me, a very much stronger feeling than we possess at present respecting the sin which St. Paul charges upon the Jews of his day,—the sin into which he had himself fallen;—we need to appreciate more deeply the withering effects of that sin upon the race, because it is a sin to which we also are liable. We need a much stronger feeling of our national functions and national responsibilities than we have at present,—of God as the Lord God of England no less than He was of Israel. For the tendency of our religious teaching has been to individualize all our thoughts, and so to put us out of sympathy with the language and principles of the Old Scriptures.

But if the Jew in past times—if the Jew of this time—has denied Jesus to be the Christ, just because he would not allow that One had come Who broke down the distinction between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, Who had in Himself made of the twain one new Man, may we not be bearing a stronger testimony against that denial,—a stronger testimony

for the special truth which it contradicts,—by showing that we can abolish distinctions which under the old economy could not have been abolished? Is not this a lesson to the Jew respecting the new creation in Jesus Christ? Is it not a lesson to ourselves? And may not the impossibility of preserving a feeble —a very feeble—assertion that the right to legislate depends upon the faith of a Christian, be one step to the fuller manifestation of the truth that Christ's dominion over us and over all men does not rest upon our opinion about His dominion; of the truth that He is King, if half-a-dozen members of either House of Parliament, or if all the members of both Houses disown His authority?

With respect to the other question; I fear, my brethren, that the notion of the exclusion of the Jews being *the* distinguishing mark of our Christian nationality, may have helped to make us forget that we are called upon to give some other evidence—evidence of an entirely different kind—that we are a Christian nation, in our own land and in every portion of the earth which we govern. The responsibility —the tremendous responsibility—rests upon us, of showing that we confess, in very deed, the rule of a Righteous King and Saviour, of One Who has taken away that which separated the families of the earth, and has made them one in Himself. By every righteous act which we do at home or abroad, we signify that we are His subjects; by every unrighteous

act we proclaim ourselves rebels against Him. Just so far as we make the people of the earth, whether they bear the name of Christian, whether they cling to the Old Covenant, whether they are idolaters, understand that there is a universal fellowship for them in Jesus Christ; just so far we are undermining their superstitions, their unbelief, their worship of divided Gods; just so far we are fulfilling the function of a Christian nation.

If we forget that we are members of such a nation, that we share its blessings, that its sins and its punishments are ours, I cannot believe that we shall fulfil our personal duties, I cannot believe that we shall worship God in our families, that we shall reverence Him in our hearts. I dread that Atheism as much as those earnest people can do, who fear that the admission of Jews to Parliament will produce it. Their prophecies make me tremble, for I feel in myself the tendencies which might help to fulfil them. Those tendencies must be also in our statesmen, for they represent us; our weaknesses and corruptions must needs affect their thoughts and their acts. They may —I am sure they do—often sacrifice to opinion and to chance that which should be laid on the altar of God. But I cannot help thinking that some of the acts which we censure as acts of policy, are in truth the abandonment of a long-cherished policy to irresistible indications of God's will. They work diligently to preserve some maxim or law which we tell them is indispensa-

ble to the stability of the Church, as the shipmen of Tarshish rowed hard against wind and tide rather than cast out Jonah, when, after all, it was as necessary for his work as for their safety that he should be cast out. No doubt, changes of opinion or of action, when *we* refuse to regard them as submissions to the Divine Will expressed in events—when *we* proclaim them as mere submissions to expediency—are likely to be felt as such by our rulers and by our people. They cannot be expected to be more devout than those whose business it is to trace the Divine hand everywhere. The removal of restrictions will destroy our faith, if our faith has consisted in restrictions. It seems therefore a solemn duty to proclaim, at this time and at all times, that our faith—our national faith—is positive, not negative. It may be right to prevent our English constituencies from choosing Jews as their representatives—it may be right to concede to them the privilege;—that is a question about the answer to which the best men may differ. But woe to England if her belief in the Son of God, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, turns upon the decision! Woe to each of us if we are not labouring to teach our countrymen another lesson, which we have first learnt through our own experience! Woe to us if we are not testifying, day by day, that in Christ Jesus exclusion of unbelievers from civil privileges availeth nothing, that admission of unbelievers to civil privileges availeth nothing,—that we *ourselves* are to

be new creatures in Him, putting off the old, false, corrupt nature, putting on that which is made after God in righteousness and true holiness! If we speak truth every one with his neighbour, we shall know that we are members one of another, and that He who is the Truth is our Living and Eternal Head.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

June 13, 1858.

PHILIPPIANS I. 10.

"THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENCE TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST."

THESE words express the deepest wishes which the Apostle could utter before God for his converts at Philippi. It is equally clear that they express his deepest longings for himself. He could not separate what was good for them from what was good for him. We might fancy that the veteran of Christ, who had fought so many battles and who bore so many scars, may have had a right to ask for blessings which could not be granted to the raw recruit. He did not think so. What he rejoices in is, that he has fellowship with them in the Gospel; fellowship in their sorrows, their conflicts, their supports. He does not suppose that there can be a greater reward than that they and he should enter into the fullest meaning of this fellowship. He knows that the same enemies are at work to rob them of this reward; to keep them asunder. If they, who many of them had but just renounced their idols and been admitted to bap-

tism, did not keep this goal in sight, did not aspire to reach it, they were forgetting their calling: they were not believing in God their Father. If he who had received so many revelations, who had endured so many sufferings, had thought that there was some higher end than this, or that he was more secure of this end than they were, less liable in the pursuit of it to the assaults of the principalities and powers with which they and he were wrestling, he would have fallen from Christ, while he was glorifying himself as the Apostle of Christ.

And what was the great gift for which he strove on their behalf and on his own? It was that they might know the things which had been already given them; that they might know them by loving them; that they might have judgment, or a power of distinguishing between that which was true and that which was counterfeit, between that which is and that which is not. It was not that they should be lifted to some rare pitch of excellence, which could be pointed at and admired, or upon which they could congratulate themselves, but that they should be "*sincere and without offence.*" These are the saintly qualities which he coveted for them,—yes, brethren, which he coveted for us. Let us consider what they are.

I. The word which we render "*sincere*" is eminently expressive and beautiful. It is compounded of a substantive signifying a ray of the sun, and of the verb "to judge." The union of the sensible image

with the mental act denotes a clearness within, in all the movements and exercises of the thought and judgment, like that clearness which all external things derive from the presence of the sun. Language of this kind has an inexhaustible freshness. Every one in any age or country, who has an eye to notice the most obvious effects of light, or can penetrate into its latent influences, has a store of wisdom which he can apply to the still more wonderful processes in the hearts of himself and of his fellow-men. St. Paul had been familiarized by the Old Scriptures with these practical and universal lessons. He knew how our Lord had claimed and illustrated them by His parables. He knew that when He called Himself "*the Light of the World,*" He proclaimed Himself to be as much in contact with the hearts and understandings of men as the sun is with their bodily senses, —to be as mighty in unfolding the true human life as that is in awakening the vitality of the vegetable and animal creation. St. Paul could say nothing to his disciples better than this, "Believe that this Light is with you. Cultivate the habit of recognizing it. All God's discipline is to remind you of its presence."

I am far, however, from wishing you to forget the word "*sincere*" which our translators have used, or to think that they could have found a more suitable one. I would rather lead you to consider whether the clearness I have spoken of be not the fullest and most reasonable explanation of sincerity; whether St.

Paul does not show us how it is possible for you and me to be sincere. Are you surprised that I should say *possible?* I do not think any Saints or Martyrs or Apostles would have been startled or scandalized if that expression were applied to them. They were tempted every day to deal fraudulently with their fellow-men, with their consciences, with God. Each new event and perplexity in their outward path made them aware of some trick which the deceitful heart was practising on itself, of some web in which the spirit of lies was seeking to entangle it. The falsehoods took different shapes for each, according to the time and circumstances in which he dwelt, the society with which he mixed, his individual temperament, the particular good which God would have him show forth, the particular work which God had set him to do. Their only safety consisted in being awake to their danger. They found that they could not become sincere by talking of sincerity, or by any violent efforts to make themselves the models which they described. So long as they were living in themselves, thinking about themselves, insincerity was almost inevitable. But they looked out of themselves; they confessed the light that was near them; they asked that it might shine into them; they came to it, that their deeds might be made manifest, whether they were wrought in God. So they acquired that clearness of spirit, that guilelessness, which even bad men hail when they behold it; which speaks out in unconscious acts;

which smiles on us through the free open countenance, which we are sure must have come from God, and is His own image.

Oh, brethren, is it not well to remind ourselves that this sincerity is possible for us? Do we not often think that it is impossible? How many little, dark, shameful cheats do we detect in ourselves—how much plotting vanity—how much false modesty, seeking applauses by affecting to shun them—how much doubling, to avoid the frank confession of wrong to others and to ourselves—how much unwillingness to look at acts and states of mind as they are, and call them by their right names—how many balancings and compromises with conscience—how much inclination to traffic with God, that we may escape punishment and obtain happiness! I say, we find this insincerity in ourselves—for that is the true way of stating the case. We are willing enough to acknowledge that the age holds out many temptations to insincerity, and we are not wrong in that assertion. A time when religious profession is an easy, reputable, advantageous thing; a time when feelings and exertions for all possible subjects and occasions are labelled and ticketed in books, so that a man knows which he is to take on every emergency; a time when there is a fearful facility in the composition of sentences; a time when criticism on the thoughts and acts of others has become a profession, and when the words "*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*" "*Take first the beam out of*

thine own eye," are considered by men who circulate Bibles to be obsolete commands, proceeding from an authority to which no reverence is owing; a time when monstrous outrages against morality, said to be perpetrated in the name of religion, are encountered by outrages as gross; when the praise and condemnation of newspapers are more thought of by the religious than the praise and condemnation of God;—such a time, let us confess it freely, is most perilous to sincerity. But it is perilous, because it tempts us to forget that there is another light than any which comes from society or from ourselves; that by it we are intended to walk; that in it alone we can walk honestly.

And therefore the bane and the antidote lie, as they always do in God's world, close to each other. The evils of each past age were the instruments of forming the minds of the good men who lived in it. By these they learned what they needed to fly from in themselves, and whither they must fly. As God revealed to them more of their own sinfulness, He revealed to them more of His redemption. Our age may be just such a minister of blessing to us, if we will use it. If, instead of denouncing one world or another,—the political, commercial, or religious,—if, instead of succumbing to one or another,—we will remember that whatever bad we see in them has its counterpart in us; we shall be driven to seek our help in Him who desireth truth in our inward parts, and will make us know wisdom secretly.

II. The next expression of the Apostle, "*without offence,*" is scarcely less significant than the one of which I have been speaking. They are different, but the same idea is latent in both.

The Apostle had been desiring for the Philippians a perpetual sunlight in their hearts; the thought instantly suggests itself that in such a light they would not stumble. He knew how many causes there were of stumbling in that day. John, who was more than a prophet, the messenger who went before our Lord, stumbled awhile at the thought of his strange imprisonment. Could Jesus be He that should come? Must they not look for another, who would not leave his faithful servant to the mercies of Herod? Thoughts must have come to St. Paul in his own prison hours, which enabled him to understand and to pity the doubts of the Baptist. He could tell, through his own experience, how the persecutions which the less instructed Philippians were called to undergo might stagger their faith. They had indeed those wonderful words of Christ as a perpetual warning and a perpetual encouragement, "*Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear him,*"—fear that spirit of lies and hatred "*who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell,*" who is seeking to draw you away from truth and love and God, to rob you of your soul's dearest treasures, of its very life, and who will succeed unless you trust in that Father without whom "*not a*

sparrow falls to the ground, who numbers the very hairs of your heads," who certainly will not suffer that which is so much more precious in His eyes to perish, if you commit it to Him. They heard these words, and they did prove charms and talismans to many a witness for God in dark, terrible hours. They did say then, they have said in all days since: 'The physical torment, which can be inflicted here,— 'the physical torments which are held out to you as 'punishments which will befall you hereafter if you 'do not forswear that truth which your conscience 'owns cannot be so terrible as a lie; for that comes 'straight from the devil; to yield to that is, to yield 'to him; to become naturalized to that, is to fall into 'the second death, the true Gehenna. And, there-'fore, hold fast by the God of Truth and Love. Any 'one who would tempt you from Him, would lead 'you to be false to Him, is an incarnation of Satan, 'though he comes like an angel of light. Therefore 'fear him more than all outward enemies, and cry to 'your Father in Heaven that He will not suffer him 'to tempt you above what ye are able to bear.' I say the Christians in St. Paul's day had this blessed amulet, which their Lord had furnished them with. Yet even it would have been of no use if they had not been continually reminded by their teacher on earth, and by another Divine teacher who was nearer to them than he was, how likely they were to stumble even at very slight troubles which they had not looked for.

And the Apostle knew that if this class of offences was removed, there would be others just as dangerous. Though he was too wise of heart to idolize adversity, or to teach his disciples that it was free from the sorest temptations, he still knew, better than any man, how sweet the uses of it are in God's hand, and how very bitter its opposite, though good in itself, may prove to a man or to a Church. He did not suppose, when Christ's name should be no longer spoken against, but should be exalted in high places, and the profession of the Cross should be desirable, and the offence of it should cease, that then there would be no more lonely captives sending the sad message, *"Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?* Is this world, so full of misery and pride and cruelty, that which Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood? Is this Church, which curses, blasphemes, murders, for Thy sake, that which Thou hast espoused to Thyself as a chaste virgin, which Thou hast clothed with bridal and royal ornaments, which Thou hast made all glorious within?"

St. Paul may not have been enabled to look, as his brother-Apostle was, into the future conditions of mankind, and to see the toils and the apparent triumphs of the Beast and the false Prophet; but at least he knew the past state of his own people, the chosen people, too well not to expect that Christendom might need its Sennacheribs and its Nebuchadnezzars, wars, famines, pestilences, to save it from

the effects of its own prosperity, and that while that prosperity lasted, it might conceal the most profound infidelity under the fairest profession. He did not, therefore, ask that his converts might have outward sunshine, as if by walking in that they would avoid stumbling, but that there might be a track of Divine light for their steps, through whatever regions, gay or wintry, they should have to pass. The spiritual illumination which he sought for them would show them that Jesus the Crucified is He that has come, and is now with us, and that we are not to look for another. It would show them that though all are false, He is the Truth; that if His followers plot and deceive, it is not because they believe in His Cross and Passion, His Resurrection and Ascension, but because they have lost faith in them,—because they have put themselves and their own fancies in the place of these great realities. It will show them that these verities will come out fuller and brighter as the inventions grow pale and vanish away. It will show them that the light in which they have believed when they could not see it, and in which they have tried to walk, is brightening into a perfect Day.

III. This is the third part of the Apostle's prayer, which arises most naturally out of the other. He desires that they may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. I was speaking to you, not long since, of the duty and the blessing of hoping

for that day. I tried to show you that we could not really be still when the earth is shaking, unless we cherished the expectation that there would be a full revelation of a perfect Order, a divine Kingdom. I said that we could not really know that the Lord is God, unless we believed that the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, would be manifested, and that all which is dark would be scattered by His appearing. I have pointed out to you now and then the confusions which accompany this belief in some who profess it. I have done so that you might be able to receive it and live upon it, without the distraction and uncertainty which arise from the mixture of our crude fancies and speculations with that which is above them and the deliverance from them. The day of Christ, as the Apostles set it forth to us, is not a day in which a few are to look for their triumph, and for the defeat of their enemies. It is the day when the Son of Man will be revealed as the King of the Universe, when His victory for mankind shall be proved to be a real, not an imaginary one. The day of Christ is not the proclamation of One Who has been for ages a stranger to the world which He visited for a few years; it is the assertion that He Who sacrificed Himself is, and always has been, the prince of all the kings of the earth, from Whom all their power has been derived, Who alone has prevented it from being destructive of themselves and of those they have governed, to Whom

they must give account of it. The day of Christ is not the ascent of a new sun into the firmament, it is the meridian splendour of that light which has been lightening every man that has come into the world.

These considerations are especially important in reference to the text which I have been considering. As I have explained already, the thought of a light pervades the whole passage. To be sincere is to be in the light; the secret of not stumbling is to walk in the light. The Philippians are treated as children of the Day; they are to live as if it was already as much revealed as it ever can be. To Christ they are to refer their daily acts, the thoughts which arise continually in their hearts. They are to desire that He should show them which had come from Him, and could bear His daylight,—which belonged to the night. So they would be preserved from stumbling themselves; so they would be preserved from giving occasion of stumbling to others. For it must never be forgotten that those who are united together as members of one body cannot allow darkness to dwell in themselves without spreading darkness,—cannot fall without producing falls. This is the meaning of that awful sentence, "Woe to the world because of offences." This is another reason why we should be so careful to separate the light which is in us from the darkness which is trying to comprehend it; this is a new motive for keeping ourselves in the recollection and in the hope of that day which shall bring forth whatsoever is sin-

cerely good, and shall destroy whatsoever corruption has been mixed with it. Brethren! we must stumble, we must make others stumble, we must be tolerant of evils which we ought to hate in our own hearts, we must be intolerant of those whom God cares for, if we walk in the light of the sparks which we have kindled or which the public opinion of the age has kindled. It signifies not what professions we make, what reputation we earn; we shall commit acts which are hateful in God's sight, and which bring scandal on His Name.

But if we are looking to the day of Christ, we shall be every hour more impatient of that in us which defiles and perverts His truth; we shall be every hour more patient of the confusions in our fellow-men. We shall be less and less angry that they do not disperse at our bidding. We shall tremble to increase them by the use of our feeble instruments, instead of that penetrating Word which is said to be "*sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" We shall know that Christ must sever the tares from the wheat,—that we cannot.

Oh, may God grant us all the Spirit of Truth, of Love, of Patience, to prepare us for that day, to bid us rejoice in the thought how righteous the judgment of it will be, to make us content to leave ourselves and all men in His hands, Who will then be manifested to quick and dead! May those who teach remember

that for every idle word which they speak in God's name, they must give account in that day! May those who hear remember that the feeblest words which have told them of His love and of His desire that they should be renewed in His image, were *His* words, and will be proved to be true as much by their neglect as by their belief of them! And may we remember that the highest office of all is not to speak words, though they be Divine words, in men's ears, but to present the finished Sacrifice of Christ to His Father, to offer ourselves as sacrifices holy and acceptable in Him, to ask that He Who alone can see will see if there is any wicked way in us, that He Who alone can guide will guide us in the way everlasting! How can we better gather up all our petitions, for ourselves, for those who are dear to us, for the whole Church, than in the Apostle's prayer, "*that we may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ*"?

Third Sunday after Trinity.

(THE QUEEN'S ACCESSION.)

June 20, 1858.

ROMANS XII. 4.

"HE IS THE MINISTER OF GOD TO THEE FOR GOOD."

WE the Clergy call ourselves Ministers. You grant us this title, even if you refuse us others which we are wont to assume. It sounds a humble one; it seems only to say that we renounce all right to be masters. Still it has produced in other days, it does sometimes produce in ours, an effect the very reverse of this upon clergymen as well as laymen. Any exclusive claim, be it to the meanest office in the world, may puff up him who makes it with a certain sense of consequence, which is felt to be the more monstrous by others, because it stands in such strong contrast with the thing which is claimed. I suppose the arrogance strikes many as greater, not less, when the ellipsis is supplied, when we say, as St. Paul says, "We are ministers *of God.*" And yet it is dangerous to leave the question open, whether we mean this or something quite different from this. Every one who holds our office knows

well that, in some sense or other, he must be a Minister. He must be the servant of his own tastes, notions, imaginary interests. Or he must be the servant of the tastes, notions, imaginary interests of those among whom he works. Or he must, at whatever hazard, with whatever conscious danger of putting forward a pretension which may exalt him in his own eyes, or may win for him a superstitious reverence, or may expose him to ridicule by his failure in supporting it, boldly say, "I am the minister of God; my commission is from Him." But when we have ventured on this language, believing it to be true, we have not gained much. The name is awful, but it is familiar. It suggests to most a certain round of duties, which they expect a certain set of persons to perform. A few, to whom history has taught its possible significance, may be offended at it. They may hint that the *Servus Servorum* set his foot on the neck of kings; that to set their feet on the necks of the people in different lands was the function of those who wore the same livery. But for one who cherishes these fears there will be nine who think the phrase a mere innocent fiction. There will be scarcely an hour in the day in which each of us is not tempted to think the same.

What escape is there from these opposite dangers, continually succeeding each other, of ecclesiastical pretension and ecclesiastical impotence? I know none but this: that we should resolutely adhere to the name

which something higher than law or custom originally bestowed upon us, but which these have ratified; and that then we should as resolutely affirm in the ears of all men, that our name is a sign to them, as well as to us; that we are called Ministers of God to the intent that they may be reminded what they are; that it is a sin in them as it is in us to assume any position or dignity below this. There is no fear, if we pursue this course honestly, that we shall pass for more than we are worth upon the strength of a name; or that the name shall be set at naught by the boast which accompanies it; or that it should be reckoned merely as one of those safe and harmless lies which the world believes it may indulge in. The word will again carry with it, as every word should, both healing power and a sting.

I. In the chapter from which my text is taken, St. Paul speaks of civil rulers as ministers of God. He does not limit or soften his language to suit the circumstances of his own time. He does not say, "Emperors and kings *ought* to be ministers of God. It would be very well if they would consent to be so." He says boldly and simply, "They *are* ministers of God." It is not in their pleasure *not* to be so. They must be so, if they dislike the necessity ever so much, if they rebel against it ever so fiercely. Nero's *will* might be devilish; every *power* which he wielded was Divine. Not one energy, physical or intellectual, which he abused had come from an evil source; not one was his own. He had been appointed to rule the

world which he tormented, by Him Who loved that world. He was the steward of His treasures, if he spent them in making those miserable whom they were intended to bless.

How would such a doctrine as this affect the Christians of the Roman Church? Would it lead them to look with more slavish fear and reverence upon those who wore the trappings of power? Would it lead them to regard with less of horror and indignation those who were turning power to the destruction of their fellow-men? They could not confound vital power with those outside accidents of it which our vulgar nature prompts us to admire and envy, when they recollected from Whom it came; when they remembered what that Power was, which called the earth and the heavens into being, and renewed them every morning. They must hate every cruel and wanton exercise of power when they thought with themselves, "The royalty of kings and emperors is but the reflection of the royalty which *He* manifested in its fulness, Who healed the sick, cast out devils, went about doing good." The effect of regarding Nero as a minister of God, will, no doubt, have been to make them patient under his government, so far as it affected themselves,—afraid to engage in any mad schemes for subverting it. But this faith will have given strength to their cries that the earth might be delivered from all her oppressors. It will have assured them that those cries would not be in vain. It will

have made them welcome their own sufferings as steps towards the Redemption.

Those who attempt the hard task of finding apologies for tyranny in Scripture, sometimes ask triumphantly, "If Nero's power, according to St. Paul, was ordained by God, what subjects can pretend that the powers which are over them have some lower origin?" I answer, "Certainly none." And subjects would be most unwise if they wished that their cases should be an exception from the Apostle's rule, if they did not insist that they should be brought within the range of that rule. For what does it import? That every power is a trust. That every power implies responsibility by its very nature. That this responsibility is not to some imaginary judge who will not call the wrong-doer to account, but to a real Judge Who is standing at the door, Whom the greatest criminal cannot escape. Read the history of the Roman Empire in the light of St. Paul's sentence. Every sting of conscience which visited Nero that night when he knew himself to be his mother's murderer, was a message to him, "Thou art God's minister, and thou hast used His sword against thy own flesh and blood." The assassin by whom he fell at last was saying, "Thou art God's minister; and so am I, guilty like thyself, but ordained to call thee to His Judgment-seat, that thou mayest declare what thou hast done with the millions which He has committed to thee."

Surely, brethren, if a people believed this, if rulers

believed it, it would be something more than the notion that they may be brought to some bar, which we call "public opinion," about which no one can tell what it is or where it is, whether its sentences are righteous or unrighteous, who enforces them if they are one or the other. We should feel indeed that, in the truest sense, rulers are responsible to their subjects, because, in a world that is governed by a righteous God, every one is responsible, for his neighbour and to his neighbour. Such responsibility does not interfere with free manly action, with the courage that can defy obloquy for the sake of right, with the will that commands, with the strong hand that punishes disobedience. It does not interfere with these, because there is a continual reference to One Who knows all things, and is not warped in His decisions by any partiality. What does interfere as much with the government of rulers as with the freedom of subjects, with all the life of society, with all the manliness of individuals, is the sense of a vague, uncontrolled tyranny, lodged in a man, in a mob, in a soldiery, or in a press, which is guided by no rule but its own caprice, which claims a right to do as it likes, which declares that it is the minister of nothing, though it becomes by turns the minister of everything that is most grovelling and base.

I do not mean for an instant to deny the reality of that mysterious Opinion, before which, it is said, that rulers as well as people must crouch. I do not

deny its awfulness. It is very awful to think that you and I are contributing to create this power; that it depends in some measure—none can tell in how great a measure—upon each of us, of what kind that power shall be. Some of the qualities of a spirit of grace or of a spirit of perdition it is receiving from the words we speak and the acts we do. But let those who confess this power, who are not hindered from confessing it by its intangible immaterial nature, ask themselves whether it requires any more credulity to acknowledge the presence of a living, personal Ruler over their doings and their thoughts, and whether, if they made that acknowledgment habitually, they might not help to change Opinion, from a misshapen idol, with its eyes downwards and fixed upon itself, into a form expressing all holy memories and glorious aspirations. Such a change can never, indeed, come from that sort of faith which speaks of God as possessing a reserved, ultimate dominion,—as entitled to a peppercorn rent in token of that dominion. It will take place whenever, in the full force of the words, we say that He is our King, and that we are all His ministers.

II. But St. Paul says, further, "He is a minister of God to *thee*." A strange assertion! A minister of God to the Roman world the Emperor might be, however little he fulfilled his ministry. But a minister of God to some individual member of the Roman Church, who must have counted it the best

privilege of his obscurity that the Emperor would never hear of him, never inquire after him,—that he might live and die out of the reach of his favours or his malice,—how could he be a minister of God to that man? In this way: his existence was a testimony to the poor Christian that he belonged to the great Roman world, that he was concerned, whether he was citizen or slave, in its welfare and its misery. That was a great step in his education, in his moral and spiritual education. When he was taken into the Christian Church, when he claimed to be a member of Christ and a child of God, he contracted affinities and obligations to Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free. But he might easily forget these affinities and obligations. He might fancy—there was everything to encourage the fancy—that the Church was an isolated body,—that those who lay beyond it belonged to a different race. The fact of being under a common civil ruler, when brought before him as St. Paul brought it before him, deepened and expanded the doctrine of his baptism, and removed the confusions which mingled with it. Nor was the benefit destroyed, scarcely weakened, by the character of the ruler. If he was an oppressor, there was more necessity of falling back on the Source from which his authority proceeded. In secret prayers to Him Whose will is to good and only to good, that His will might be done on earth as it is in Heaven, how much more is learnt than from all books, concerning that go-

vernment which is not less individual because it is universal, which does not overlook the solitary penitent because it is occupied with the destinies of the Church in all tribes and nations, which does not cease to direct the revolutions of planets because it attends to the young ravens when they cry! Is not the bitterest tyrant a minister of God to the man whom he enables to make these wonderful discoveries?

I take an extreme instance, for St. Paul was writing in the sight of such instances, and I wish to show that his language will bear the test. But I am far more desirous to assert the truth of his position in reference to those rulers who confess their calling and try to fulfil it. How cold and hard it is to speak of them as ministering only to the body politic! So far as they contribute to its health and growth,—so far as they make us feel it to be a living whole,—so far as they show us that material prosperity is not that which constitutes or preserves a nation,—so far as they teach us that we belong to the same race with those who spoke our tongue and fought our battles in other days,—so far they must be ministers of God to each one of us personally. For are they not quickening our hearts and hopes; are they not making our sense of immortality stronger; are they not helping to burn out some of our frivolity and selfishness; are they not enabling us to enter more truly the Kingdom of God? It is impossible, since man is made in the image of God, that all true

human rule should not be like the Divine rule in this, that it is most minute when it is most comprehensive; that it calls for the most personal loyalty when it is most generally even and just.

III. The last words of the Apostle are implied in those to which I have just alluded,—implied in the first,—yet they must not be passed over: "He is a minister of God to thee for *good*." St. Paul writes this to men who might, in a short time, be lighting the city as torches to cover the guilt of him who set it on fire. Well! and was not he a minister of God to them for good if he was the instrument of inflicting that torture? May we not say the same of every successful imitator of his,—of Charles IX. in France, of Philip II. in the Netherlands? Were they not ministers of God for good to those whom they sent beyond the reach of their crimes, to cry beneath the altar for the day when the earth should no more conceal her blood or cover her slain? The Apostle could venture the daring sentiment. He knew that by some means God would prove it to be true, for that generation and for all generations. And it will be known, some day, to how many men, governments the most hypocritical and accursed have been ministers of good, by leading them from trifling to earnestness, by changing them from reckless plotters into self-denying patriots, by turning their atheism or devil-worship into a grounded faith in the God of Truth. Many such, I fear, will

rise up in judgment against those who live in happier circumstances, to whom the name of Freedom has become so much a name of course, that they jest at it as a schoolboy phrase, or ask how much they are the richer for it, or wish they could barter it for some of the conveniences of despotism. This nerveless, heartless, purposeless temper, as it grows upon us, tends to the fulfilment of its own aspirations. Liberty cannot last when the desire for it has perished. Despotism is sure to come when it is beckoned for.

Whenever it does come, brethren, one sad discovery will be forced upon us. We may love tyranny, but we shall never love the tyrant. Loyalty, in England at least, will not be separated from the reverence for Law. We shall find that affection for the person of a Sovereign, when it is strongest and most cordial, is inseparably intertwined with the belief that the Sovereign has obligations, and confesses them. Affection for a person is indeed another thing altogether from affection for an institution. Twenty-one years ago we were in great danger of substituting the last for the first. It has been one of the great blessings of a female reign that the chivalry which had at that time suffered very greatly from political theories has in some degree been revived; that our thoughts about government have become more human and less mechanical; that we regard affections and attachments not as mere

ornaments on the outside of the social edifice, but as necessary to its compactness and stability. But this latent chivalry, which has proved a real and blessed counteraction to those evil tendencies I spoke of just now, could never have come forth at the bidding of any Mary Stuart, however brilliant and attractive, who thought that household laws and national laws were not made for her. The opinion which treats Sovereigns, male or female, as having some right, divine or human, *against* the nation which they represent, or apart from it, has been one which England has shed her best blood to extinguish, and which no sophistry can revive amongst us.

But the opinion which is the direct opposite of this, that the Sovereign is the minister of God to each of us for good,—this, I think, we should strive with all our might to realize and hold fast. We inquire how the Apostle was enabled to proclaim that principle in the heart of the Roman capital, in its darkest age. We shall find no explanation but this: that as he believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the King of men, he could not help believing that all human society was organized according to the law which He expressed in words, which He embodied in His Incarnation and His Death, "*The Chief of all is the Servant of all.*" He could not doubt that the head of the Roman legions, the ruler of the Roman provinces, was therefore a minister of God,—a minister therefore for good, since that is the one end, if

Christ's revelation is true, which God seeks for His creatures. He could not doubt that if the Emperor believed this he would be a blessing to the world; that he was a curse to it because he thought the world was to minister to him, and not he to it. He could not doubt that every Christian ought to maintain the truth which Nero set at naught, and that if he did, it would prove itself in his case,—Nero *would* be a minister of God for good to *him*.

And if we inquire how the faith that there is a constitution for nations, which kings, parliaments, charters, assume and ratify, but which they did not create, has wrought itself into the heart of modern Europe, the answer, I think, is the same. When the Incarnation is denied,—when a Mediator between God and man is utterly rejected,—you must have an absolute Caliph or Sultan; you must have a government carried on by mere officials; you cannot have the confession of a relationship between the Sovereign and his subjects; you cannot have a principle of relationship, interdependence, mutual obligation, penetrating all ranks and orders. These are involved in the faith of a Son of God and a Son of Man; these are strong as that is strong, weak as that is weak. Whatever has suffocated that faith,—be it ecclesiastical pretension, be it the revolt against that pretension, be it the worship of money, be it the worship of a Tyrant instead of a Father,—undermines constitutional liberty. To bring forth that faith in its

fulness before the nations which nominally confess it, is to help them in breaking their political fetters. We cannot dig so deep for the foundations of our own free institutions without assisting to bring all Englishmen within the circle and blessing of them. We cannot dig so deep for the foundations of European liberty without perceiving that the most various forms of society may express a common truth which is lying beneath them. If priests, instead of setting at naught the civil order of nations, will show that a universal Church, of which Christ is the centre, underlies them, quickens them, preserves their distinctions and their unity, the laity will readily own them as ministers of God. If, in the reign of our Queen, some cheering glimpse of that freedom with which Christ has made us free, may be imparted to our own people, to our dependencies, to the different tribes of the earth, how will ages to come exclaim, "Verily, she has been a minister of God to us for good!"

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

June 27, 1858.

MATTHEW XXI. 23–27.

"AND WHEN HE WAS COME INTO THE TEMPLE, THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE CAME UNTO HIM AS HE WAS TEACHING, AND SAID, BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS? AND WHO GAVE THEE THIS AUTHORITY? AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, I ALSO WILL ASK YOU ONE THING, WHICH IF YE TELL ME, I IN LIKE WISE WILL TELL YOU BY WHAT AUTHORITY I DO THESE THINGS. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, WHENCE WAS IT? FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN? AND THEY REASONED WITH THEMSELVES, SAYING, IF WE SHALL SAY, FROM HEAVEN; HE WILL SAY UNTO US, WHY DID YE NOT THEN BELIEVE HIM? BUT IF WE SHALL SAY, OF MEN; WE FEAR THE PEOPLE; FOR ALL HOLD JOHN AS A PROPHET. AND THEY ANSWERED JESUS, AND SAID, WE CANNOT TELL. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, NEITHER TELL I YOU BY WHAT AUTHORITY I DO THESE THINGS."

ONE might be quite sure that the chief priests and the elders would "*reason with themselves*" just as we are told by the Evangelist that they did. The simple consideration, "What is the fact, or what do we believe to be the fact?" is not the one which would present itself to their minds. It was a chief part of their religion to avoid impolitic words or

acts, words or acts which might lead to some mischievous consequence. Straightforwardness and veracity they will have learnt to believe not only inconvenient, but in a certain sense wrong. The first thing required of them was, in their judgment, to keep up the credit of the Law and of those who interpreted and administered it. To endanger the popular faith in themselves was their highest notion of a sin. Who could tell what might come next if their disciples saw that they had committed themselves to any false step? I know not whether there is a more fearful symptom of decay in the heart of a nation than this. When its teachers not only dare not speak out the truth, but actually make a principle of not speaking it;—when they not only shrink, through some cowardly shame, from declaring the thing as it is, but when they have persuaded themselves that evasion is a merit, that there is a higher and better way of serving the God of Truth than by being true,—we may be sure that society has become radically corrupt, and that some great change is at hand.

I. But though the account which the Gospel gives of the motives which led the priests and scribes to reply to our Lord as they did, carries the most undoubted internal mark of genuineness,—though it affords us a glimpse into the secret life of that time, without which the events that occurred in it would be unintelligible,—we may believe that they were actually uncertain whether John's mission was of Heaven or

of men. They were in a double sense self-deceivers. They sought carefully for language which might conceal their thoughts, and often after all expressed very nearly what they meant. I say, *very nearly*, for those words of John, which were addressed to their own class,—perhaps to some of themselves, "*O generation of vipers, who hath bidden you to flee from the wrath to come?*" must have sometimes occurred to them; and then the conviction will have come to them with a power they could not gainsay: 'He who spoke *that*, had his commission from Heaven, not of men.' An inward voice will have told them this; if they had heeded it, they might have given a direct answer to our Lord. But it was part of their disease that they did not heed this monitor, that they did not think they ought to heed it. They had rules for ascertaining whether a man who professed to come with a message from God was an authorized messenger; they expected him to exhibit some signs of his mission, which they, being students of the Prophets, could at once recognize.

What faith they had, was a faith in their own power of applying these tests,—in the impossibility of the multitude, the unlearned and ignorant, being able to apply them. There were doubtless differences between them as to the presence or absence of the fitting signs in the case of John; the mind of the same person may have often varied on the point. Now the Rabbi would be struck with some correspondence which he had not

observed; a light coming he knew not from whence would illuminate the page, and seem to show that the teacher with the leathern girdle about his loins might have been sent to him; then he would be ashamed at a conclusion for which so little tangible evidence could be produced; afraid to think that in his own day, actually before his eyes, there had been a witness of the Divine presence.

Such varieties of feeling might seem to justify men of a less prevaricating temper than these for saying, "We cannot tell." They might even find a cause for self-congratulation in the diffidence which they manifested. They had not merely been skilful in avoiding a possible future mischief; they had been cautious and modest in not determining a point on which rash, foolish men were ready at once to pronounce.

II. "*The multitude counted John for a prophet.*" And were not the multitude liable to be deceived? Were they not continually the prey of impostors? We should certainly say that it has been so in every age and country; the writers of the New Testament assure us that it was so, specially in that age and country. They speak of Judas and Theudas as specimens of a class of men who were from time to time rising up, always with some claim to be teachers, inspired men, Messiahs, Christs, who tempted the people to acts of rebellion and madness, who sometimes suffered with their victims,—deceived as much as any of them;—sometimes deserted them. Such men the

Jewish mob regarded as prophets; if they were mistaken in one case, why not in another? What did they know about the marks of a holy man? What skill had they in penetrating the dark passages of the Divine mind, and finding differences or correspondences? They were always going wrong, always at the mercy of some sudden, false, violent impression or other; what did their testimony signify? What wise men would judge the pretensions of a teacher by counting heads, and seeing whether he had the votes of a majority?

It was easy to argue thus, not easy to find where the flaw in the argument lay. And yet every learned doctor, when he had proved his point to his own satisfaction, will have been haunted by a thought of this kind: "It is very strange that men living in cities, in the country, by the sea,—women, publicans, soldiers, brought up in circumstances altogether different,—should have been moved at once by the same impulse. It is very strange that a man holding forth no definite prospect of emancipation to the Jews from the Roman yoke, or to the poor from the oppression of the rich, threatening judgment, speaking harsh words, denouncing sin, counselling repentance, should have drawn more into the wilderness than the preachers and guides of sedition. It is strange, above all, that we should not have been able to resist the current, but should have been carried away by it, going ourselves to hear the new teacher, and even

some of us submitting to that humiliating ceremony, appointed only for Gentile proselytes." I say such reflections as these will have come to them again and again with a disturbing force, a force which could not be explained or reduced under any rules. And the result will have been greater vagueness and uncertainty as to what they should believe; a deeper assurance that there was something which they ought to believe.

III. What way was there out of this contradiction? What help had they to distinguish the true instinct of the multitude from its habitual tendency to be led away by lies? John had said to *them*, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say unto yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our father:' for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Might they not have needed *these* words? Were *they* deceptive? Did not the Pharisees know—actually know—that they were not deceptive, but that they brought deep, long-cherished deceptions of theirs to the light of day? What if John were an impostor? Then the more they purged their minds of impostures, the more sure they would be to detect him. There could be no danger in that course. Some one—they knew it—had found them out. Some one, who was acquainted with the secrets of their hearts, had revealed those secrets to them. They *were* saying within themselves, "We have Abraham to our father," while they had no likeness to Abraham. They were wrapping themselves

up in a comfortable security, while they had a sense of inward hollowness. They were exulting in the profession of faith in an unseen God; they were not believing in that unseen God. John said: "Repent! Turn round to Him Whom you say you believe in. Act as if you did believe in Him. Act as if you thought He did know you and care for you and wished you to be right in His sight,—to be true, honest men. If you have greater knowledge than the vulgar, use your knowledge. If you have studied the Law and the Prophets more than others, remember that every sentence in Law or Prophets is a declaration of God to man, and an exhortation to men not to hide their counsels deep from God. Remember that all the Law and Prophets are addressed not to Gentiles but to Jews, to men in the Covenant; that they are speaking to them of their sins and unbelief, and calling them to turn to Him from Whom they are turning away." My brethren, the Pharisees had not the slightest call to settle John's claim before they received this message as a message to themselves. If these things were true, it did not signify in the least to them whether the man who spoke them was a liar or not. Nor was it of any importance to determine how far the judgment of the multitude respecting him was to be trusted. If the multitude attended to him because he laid bare their sins and deceptions, the multitude could not be wrong. If the multitude listened to him because he showed

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them the source of their sins and the way out of them, the multitude were doing a safe thing, whether they could prove by chapter and verse that he was a person they had a right to listen to or no. The chapter or verse told them, so far as they entered into it, the same thing as he was telling them; his instructions, so far as they were obeyed, made chapter and verse shine out as they had never done before. What more did they want? what better evidence could they have had that the Book which they were taught to revere sanctioned him?

IV. The Pharisees and the multitude then had a common starting-point. Both had this test of John's truth; both might use it or reject it. If they rejected it, we may be sure they would not be capable of profiting by any other. An angel from Heaven saying, "This is a true prophet," would not have availed the least. For the angel would have had need to prove his own commission; he would have had to prove it, not to their eyes, but to their hearts. And if their hearts had clung to the falsehood or the pride which made them impervious to light, his proofs must have been wasted. But supposing this first step was taken,—supposing a Pharisee honestly confessed, "I have been deceiving myself; I have been substituting belief in a belief, for belief in God; I have been claiming to be a child of Abraham instead of claiming the privilege of a child of Abraham, which is to know God and trust Him;"—supposing

he desired that he might be brought into a truer, healthier state of mind, and that he heard the call to repentance, not as if it were meant for others, but himself;—he might, I think, find that the Prophets had given him some hints by which to identify the Baptist as one of themselves. For instance, if he turned to the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, in this new state of feeling, I do not fancy the mere outward correspondence of a "voice crying in the wilderness" would chiefly occupy him. That would only lead him to inquire whether the cry which that voice uttered was really John's. And when he read the words, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low," I cannot help thinking that he would recognize the very substance of the doctrine which had gone home to his heart, with only the more certainty and satisfaction because the form of it was so different. "The stern man with the leathern girdle bade us, the religious men, do just the same thing which he bade the publicans and harlots do. He did not treat us as better than them; he seemed to consider us worse; he made me know that I was worse. Surely this was exalting the valleys and laying the hills low. I never felt the truth or the beauty of Isaiah's discourse till now. I saw it had a beauty and a truth. The natural image was a striking one; it seemed a worthy preparation for some Divine appearance. Yet I used to feel a kind of exaggeration in it; I did not understand how the

reality could be commensurate to the symbol. I now know in myself what it is to be cast from an eminence, whence I looked down upon all beneath me as a set of crawling emmets, and to feel myself one of these emmets, not better than the meanest of them,—to feel thus, and yet to discover that each of these insects, whereof I am one, has the capacity in it of a divine elevation and glory such as I never dreamed of. Oh, surely the Prophet's comparison is not overstrained, but feeble and cold! What change in the condition of nature can be an image of this change in the condition of the lord of nature,—of Man; of the levelling which goes on in him; of this exaltation, which he feels is possible for him!" And then surely the other part of the passage will also have acquired a new significance: "The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed." John spoke of One Whose fan was in His hand, Who should purge His floor, Who should gather His wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff. He had spoken of One Who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. This was altogether a different idea of the glory of the Lord from any which the Scribe had entertained hitherto. But how it harmonized with the previous sentence, as that was interpreted to him by his internal discoveries! It was such a revelation he needed, —the revelation of One Who could purify him and purify Society from its root; Who could burn up the dross in him and in it; Who could bestow upon

him and it a new life. One Who could do that must be the King his countrymen and he were looking for. Such a One must be that Righteous Lord of Whose day or manifestation the Prophets had been continually speaking, and connecting it at once with the sins and the redemption of the nation and of the world.

V. Here were signs of a correspondence between the mind of the Prophet and the mind of John the Baptist which were worth all the signs the Pharisee had been used to look for with so much diligence. One can conceive that some of those which he had fancied were quite decisive, looked to him far less decisive than heretofore,—that he may sometimes have missed them altogether. One can fancy that he may have discovered less of a distinct chronological arrangement in the Prophets than he had supposed was there; more apparent mingling of times and seasons; more difficulty in understanding whether any of them was speaking of that which was going to take place in his own age, or of events reserved for generations to come. But I suspect that the awakened inquirer, instead of being discouraged by such an observation, will have gathered the greatest help from it. He will have found that what he needed, what he was to seek, was an Eternal Kingdom,—a Kingdom of God,—the manifestation of which might be different in one age or another; which might come more mightily into prominence at one particular

time; but which *is* the same yesterday, today, and for ever; which is really about all; which, when it shines forth with its greatest brightness and fulness, can only be entered into and really beheld by those whose eyes have been purged,—who have been stripped of their pride and self-sufficiency, and enabled to feel that their right and share in it is the same with that of every vagabond and outcast,—that every one is a stranger to it who will not submit to be humbled, and no one who will.

VI. My brethren, it is this which makes the words of my text and the whole history of John the Baptist so profoundly instructive to us. The lesson is eternally true. Our Lord did not arbitrarily refuse to tell the Pharisee what His authority was unless he could tell Him whether he believed in John's Mission. He refused to tell them what they could not understand, except upon a previous condition. Were they still the proud, contemptuous, self-exalting men whom John had denounced? They could not know what Christ's authority was; they could not enter into its meaning, let it be defined to them with the most divine accuracy. Had they listened to John's words; had they felt that they as much as any Gentile needed to be cleansed, and that God must cleanse them; had they received the call to repentance as the best, most comfortable, most divine of all messages, not only to the publican, but to them? Then they were in a condition to be taught about that mysteri-

ous government over the heart and will which Christ carries on; then they could feel something of the freedom and universality and penetrating quality of His royal grace. Every prophet had come proclaiming that valleys were to be exalted, that mountains and hills were to be made low, because every prophet had come witnessing of a divine and eternal and invisible kingdom, which claims all as its subjects, which refuses its blessings to none who do not choose to be without them. The greatest of the Prophets spoke most distinctly and fully of the abasement of the proud, of the exaltation of the beggar, because he could speak most distinctly and fully of a King Who had come into the world to be mocked, spat on, cast out as a blasphemer, and yet to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

VII. And that last of the old race of prophets was to be the opener of a dispensation, the least in which was to be greater than he. Strange that it should be so! We, the ministers of the New Covenant, cowards as we are, reeds for the most part shaken with the wind, or clad in soft garments, liking kings' houses better than the wilderness, rebuking no Herod, offending no Herodias,—we, even we are declared to be greater than the brave, true preacher of righteousness, who prepared Christ's way before Him! And it must be so. Those who speak of One Who is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, must be greater than he who only preached the bap-

tism of repentance for the remission of sins;—those who can say, "The King has come, and has died and risen and ascended, and is with us always," must be greater than the man who said, "One is coming after me Who was before me;"—those who can say, "He is baptizing with the Spirit," must be greater than the man who said, "He shall baptize with the Spirit." Yes, richer in power, with mightier responsibilities, however much poorer and feebler in purpose and in act. Shall not the time come when God will make us understand our calling, will make us willing to fulfil it, or when He will silence us altogether, and raise up faithful witnesses in our place? Is not the time at hand—is it not come—when He will Himself exalt the valleys and level the mountains, when every kind of pride—lay pride and ecclesiastical, commercial pride and religious pride—shall be trampled down, the rags that have covered it torn off, its nakedness exposed,—when every one who in weakness, ignorance, blindness, has turned to God and trusted in Him, shall have His likeness and be satisfied with it? Yes, brethren, the cry, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," shall yet be heard through the palaces and the hovels of our land. And God will make the lofty as well as the lowly understand whether that voice is from Heaven or of men. For it will come, not with evidences drawn out to suit the taste of the dogmatists of the earth, but with a demonstration to the consciences of wayfarers, convincing them by

crushing them. It will come, bidding us cease from man whose breath is in the nostrils, and expect the glory of the Lord to be revealed, which all flesh shall see, however it may shrink from the sight; in which all spirits that have waited for it shall find their own glory and life and joy.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

uly 4, 1858.

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1 CORINTHIANS XI. 26.

"FOR AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME."

I HAVE spoken to you often on the subject of the Eucharist; I must speak to you of it again. I wish that we might connect it with all the words which go forth from the pulpit on Sundays, with all the acts of our week-day life. Then, I believe, the disputes about it, which every year and month renews, which appear in every corner of the Church, will be more distressing, more intolerable to us, than they have ever been, but that they will cause us less despair. We shall find the root of them in ourselves; we shall understand why they have been so serious, why they have been so frivolous; we shall know why no clever men, no arrangements, no decrees, can settle them. We shall learn how and by Whom they must be and shall be terminated at last.

I have taken some words out of that chapter in the Epistle to the Corinthians which is the classical one

on this topic. I do not say that they tell us all we want to know respecting the Lord's Supper. They present it in one aspect. Let us consider it carefully and earnestly in that aspect; other sides of it will come out more and more clearly as we need them. If we try to embrace the whole doctrine of this Sacrament at once, if we will refer it to some thought or notion in our minds, we must contract it, we must turn it into a topic of controversy, we must lose the practical blessing of it. If we are content to follow the Apostle's hints as they offer themselves, one by one, to compare them with our own wants and experiences, to see how they interpret the wants and experiences of mankind, as history makes them known to us, our reverence for the profound and infinite meaning of the Festival will grow, as we come to wonder more at its divine simplicity.

I. This simplicity is, perhaps, what we envy most in St. Paul's discourse. "*As often,*" he says, "*as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup.*" There is nothing about the way of receiving, the thing received, the organ which receives. All such questions may be latent; they may force themselves upon us in due time. But we are not called by our teacher to engage in them now. He says merely, "Here is bread, the common food of men; here is wine, which speaks to all of life and exhilaration." We need not mount into any speculations yet; thus far, at all events, we are on plain ground. And the words,

"*as often,*" keep us on that ground. He is addressing a Society. He assumes that that Society meets at certain times, to partake of that bread and that cup. He assumes the absence of all rarity in that which is eaten and drunk to be a necessary characteristic of the feast. He assumes the meeting of poor and rich,—of all who want food, who want life,—to be a necessary characteristic of it. The Corinthians had misapprehended its nature. They had followed the old custom of feasts. Each had brought his own contribution; it had been turned into an occasion for bodily indulgence. St. Paul had denounced them in this chapter for both perversions. He speaks of their gluttony and drunkenness; he speaks of their shaming the poor. They had made it a *common* feast, in so far as 'common' implies that which is animal in opposition to that which is spiritual. They had scorned to make it common in the other sense; it was separate and exclusive. The two apparently opposite temptations are really in close alliance. At Corinth and everywhere else, in one century and another, we find them reappearing in different forms, and never far asunder. They were esteeming the sign, not the thing signified. They were making the sign narrow and partial.

II. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do *shew*." I cannot tell why our translators preferred this verb to 'proclaim' or 'announce,' which would have seemed the more obvious one.

But should we have expected either word? Are we not speaking of a Communion, of a participation in something? Can an Ordinance which possesses that character be described as showing, announcing, declaring? I must repeat what I said before. It is safer to let the Apostle explain himself, than to insist that he shall follow a course which we have prescribed for him. I believe he will tell us hereafter more about Communion and Participation than we should ever find out for ourselves; but I doubt whether we shall profit by his teaching, if we stumble at this phrase and wish to get rid of it. Do you think that any ordinance of Christ can have reference merely to the advantage or enjoyment of those who submit to it? Did He come from heaven to enjoy or to suffer; to be ministered unto or to minister? If the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine imports any communion with Him, any sympathy with Him, can this point of communion and sympathy be wanting? Did He not come to show forth or declare a truth to men which only some would enter into? If we are not willing in all our acts and services to make this a primary object,—if we are thinking of some selfish end as above this,—can we be like Him? Let us grasp this thought steadfastly. If this feast does not show forth or declare something to the world,—if we only seek in it for some benefit to ourselves,—it cannot be a communion in the body or in the mind of Jesus Christ.

I am very anxious to press this truth upon you, my brethren. I believe the forgetfulness of it has been a principal cause of the confusions which both Romanists and Protestants have fallen into respecting this Divine Feast. The Romanist has dwelt on the idea of the Eucharist as a Mystery. A dreadful secrecy belongs to its nature; the priest must hide from the vulgar the solemn incantations by which it acquires its grandeur and power; the cup must not be touched by lay lips. But he has had a feeling that in some way or other it must be a message to the world. The Host is therefore lifted on high; it is an object of reverence and worship to the most sensual. The Protestant rightly declares that what is meant for the spirit, is thus degraded into an object for the eye; that the Second Commandment is trifled with; that it cannot be trifled with, as Moses declared, by any people, except at the cost of its manliness and freedom. But in his jealousy for the rights of the spirit, he denies that the Sacrament shows forth or declares anything to mankind. He is impatient when it is called a Mystery; yet he confines its whole force to the faithful few. And so he is involved in wearisome and perpetual controversies, whether anything is actually bestowed by the Sacrament, or whether the receiver makes it what it is by the belief which he brings with him.

III. But what is it that is shown forth? St. Paul says, *The Lord's* death. If he had not said so, if this

expression, *The Lord,* did not stand written in his Epistle, there are many who would have called it hard and cold. "The Saviour," they would have said; "the divine Bridegroom, the ineffable Sacrifice that "is offered to us in this feast. How can you speak of "'the Lord' like some writer of the Old Testament?" I fancy that the Hebrew of the Hebrews used that Hebrew phrase because he deemed it not to be obsolete for any—because he knew that it was not obsolete for him. He wanted sympathy and fellowship. He wanted also to be guided and governed. The Incarnation had not lessened, but deepened his reverence for the unseen Guide of his heart and reins. His belief in a brother of Man did not make him remember less or rejoice less that He is the Lord of men. There were times when he delighted to call Him *our* Lord. There were occasions when *the* Lord expressed more fully the universality of His dominion. This was one of them. He is speaking of the bread and wine as testifying, not to him or to his brethren, but to all men, of One whose kingdom was in the midst of them,—of One who had proved Himself to be the King and Shepherd, by dying for them.

IV. For it is the Lord's *death* which we show forth, as often as we eat this bread and drink this wine. It is a common opinion among those who frequent our churches, that the preacher exists to remind them of their own mortality. You go to the scientific lecturer or the artist to hear of the wealth of life

and beauty which is scattered through the universe. During the week you are in the midst of civil stir and business. Everything speaks to you of continuous action. The Sunday schoolmaster, you suppose, is to counteract the impressions which you have received from all your other teachers. He is to talk of the wearing out of all physical powers; of the transitoriness and emptiness of all ordinary duties and occupations. It may be a monotonous chant, a drowsy requiem. But the sounds which quicken and inspirit, you expect elsewhere. At all events, if any such notes are heard from us, they must be prophetical of some enjoyment after death. Treasures in heaven we may sing of; treasures upon earth we are only to proclaim as the prey of the thief and the moth.

There are one or two reasons why we cannot acquiesce in this assignment of our parts, equitable as it may seem. The first is, that we are actually in the midst of this world and of all its countless powers and energies, physical and moral, just as you are. They are acting upon us at every moment, as they are acting upon you. If we pretend that they are not, we choose the time when we are speaking as ambassadors of the God of Truth, to utter a falsehood. If they are acting upon us, and we know that they are acting upon us, how can we exhort others to forget them? How can we fancy that we are serving the God who created the world, by persuading any man to shut his eyes to the sights and doings of the world?

And, secondly, we cannot submit to be merely preachers about the decay and extinction of life, because we cannot find from the Bible that any such commission has been given by God to His ministers. The seers of the Old Testament did not complain of the earnest interest which their countrymen took in the events that were passing around them, but of their dullness and stupidity, of their incapacity to recognize the movements of a living God in the affairs of living men, in the movements of a living world. Is it otherwise in the New Testament? Do we find there no interest in the actual economy of the world, social and natural, only a passionate eagerness to convince men that its operations were soon to be suspended, that the shadows of death were over all and would soon envelope all? Can you read a single parable of our Lord, and think this? Is He not awakening the thoughts of His hearers to notice the common life of things and men, that He may lead them to acknowledge a still deeper life below that? Are sowers, husbandmen, shepherds, kings, fathers, marriages, indifferent to Him, or only spoken of that we may be reminded how soon all such persons and things and relations are to vanish away? Are they not spoken of as signs and intimations of that Kingdom of God which is with us now, and will be fully revealed hereafter? Are not those treasures which the thief and moth destroy, selfish treasures, possessions which we lay up for ourselves? Does not our

Lord point us to the common blessings which earth and sky present to the beggar and the prince as pledges of other deeper, nearer blessings, which are hidden for all in God's own eternal love?

But, thirdly, we cannot be for ever telling men to think of their own deaths, because we are sent to bear witness of another death;—a death which does not tear men from each other, but which unites them to each other; a death for all men, for the whole world. The city of Corinth was full of activity, of speculation, of corruption. Men died there as they die here. They had poets, orators, sophists of all kinds, to tell them that death was a terrible fact. They asked the same questions as we ask, about the state of which it is the termination, and the state of which it is the beginning. St. Paul did not go among them to tell them what they knew as well as he did. He went to tell them what they wanted to know. He spoke to them of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He did not say, "None of you Corinthians can expect to exceed threescore years and ten;" but he said, "The Son of God, Who liveth for ever and ever, has taken upon Him your flesh, and suffered your death, and has risen from death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." This was the message with which he believed God had entrusted him; this was the message which he desired that all the Corinthians, Jews or Greeks, that all men everywhere should hear. Therefore he rejoiced that it was one

which had not been entrusted only or chiefly to mortal lips. Therefore he gave thanks that when Christ took bread and blessed it, He was consecrating a perpetual testimony of this truth to all nations. Wherever any men met together to keep that feast in remembrance of Him, there was a voice going forth which could not be limited to the two or three who might know His name, who might receive His tokens. When any one asked them then, or should ask their sons in the time to come, "Wherefore do ye this?" the answer would be, "Because the Son of God, Whom we confess as the Head and Lord of all men, has died that death which you and we die, that death which severs us from each other, that death which seems to sever us from God. He *has* died this death. He *has* come out of it. He claimed God as His Father. God, by raising Him again, has owned Him as His Son."

And if the inquirer went on to object that such a service as this could not be of any great worth, nay, that it was a false service, because sorrow and misery and disease and death remained in spite of it, and because those who ate of this feast were as much subject to them as any others, nay, often were called to endure greater sufferings, and to die more violent deaths than other men, the answer would be something like this:—"If men did not die, if all men did not, there would be no reality, no meaning in Christ's death. He has died because He would have no pri-

vilege distinct from that of us whom He calls His brethren. And God forbid that we should wish for any such privilege! God forbid that we should ask to be taken out of the condition of men, when He refused to be so! God forbid that if He bore the worst and most shameful death of all, we should count any kind of death a hardship and not a gift to us! We are not witnesses for ourselves, but witnesses for Mankind, witnesses for Him, the Lord and Brother of men. What we are afraid of is the setting up of ourselves, the wishing to be separate from our fellow-creatures, which makes us separate from Him. To be shut up in himself was the guilt of the traitor when Satan, the spirit of selfishness, entered into him, when he abjured his Master, and made light of the pledges of His love and forgiveness. That is death indeed, that is damnation, that is what we ask Him to deliver us from, when we come to eat this common bread and drink this common cup. And we are sure that He is faithful, and that the witnesses of His death are not lying but true witnesses, and that He has died for you and for all, and that His love is stronger to bind men and to bind the universe together, than all the powers in earth and hell are to tear them in pieces."

A mighty testimony,—and one that has lasted on for all these generations,—against those who would teach men to fear death, and not to rise above the fear of it, trusting in the Conqueror of it. A mighty

testimony, too, against us, when we present the Death of Christ to men in another form than that in which St. Paul presented it; when we speak of it as an arrangement to avert the consequences of man's sin, and not as a deliverance out of sin, not as the act by which God reconciles the world to Himself, not as the perfectly gracious sacrifice which He has made, and of which He wishes us to be partakers, that we may present our bodies as willing and acceptable sacrifices to Him. Thanks be to God, He has set up a preacher which does not twist or invert His Truth, but which declares what His character is, what His work has been, what His purpose, to His whole creation.

V. I say so, in the full recollection that this feast has been converted into a greater occasion of disagreement and hostility than all other institutions, human or divine. I say so, in the full recollection that it has been converted into a greater excuse for idolatry than all other institutions, human or divine. If it had not been such a witness for unity as it is, it would have provoked no strifes. If it had not been such a witness that God is a spirit as it is, there would have been no effort to turn it into a minister of carnality. If it had not risen so high above all theories and speculations as it does,—if it had not been such a gospel to the wayfarers and the sufferers,—theorists and speculators would not have spent their strength in bringing it under their petty rules and

definitions. All the dark elements in the heart of man, whatever is most grovelling, whatever is proudest, the fearful ambition of the priest, the subtlety of the doctor, the sin-sick imagination of the devotee, have all worked, that sinful men might not come as little children to eat the bread and drink the cup; so to show forth, as no words can show it forth, a Death out of which flows the freest, fullest, divinest life.

But the Feast has gone on; for it has been God's, and not man's. It has had a power over Christendom which we cannot measure, but which we shall know one day. For it contains a promise which may sustain us when its influence appears to be weakest, when the Church appears to be most rent by the factions against which it is bearing its silent, awful protest. It is written, that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we do show forth the Lord's Death *till He come*. The Incarnation and Death and Resurrection of the Son of God were the fulfilments of all that men in the Old Dispensation were able to long for. The manifestation of Christ in the glory of His Father and of the Holy Angels is the highest object which we in this Dispensation are able to long for. It includes every craving for righteous government, for a perfect Society, for the adoption of our spirits, for the perfection of the faculties of our souls, for the full redemption of our bodies. It includes the fulfilment of every relationship, of all loving intercourse,

which has been most imperfectly realized here, but which has been raised and sanctified by a diviner Communion. It includes the accomplishment of all earthly discipline and sorrow, fellowship with those whose faces we miss, but whose love must be far warmer than ever it was, because it is in more immediate contact with the perfect Love. It includes the apprehension of the order and beauty of God's creatures, when the veil of death which covers them has been taken away. It includes the ever deepening sense of the meaning and force of that Death which revealed the whole mind of God, which was the perfect Atonement for Man. Of this manifestation of Jesus Christ, the Lord's Supper is the perpetual prophecy and assurance. It is a remembrance of the past, of an act done once, never to be repeated. It is a witness of that which is—of His presence, Who has said, "Lo! I am with you alway." It testifies of an eternal Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, which is about us now, and into which we may enter. But it would not recall to us the past acts of the Son of Man for His brethren,—it would not make known His care for them now—if it did not contain also the promise and pledge that nothing which has been begun shall be left incomplete, that the curse which He bore shall be wholly taken away, that Death and Hell shall be cast into the lake of fire. Let those who will, idolize the elements; let those who will, identify

the signs of the Sacrament with that which they signify;—they cannot, by all their contrivances, invest it with a glory like that which it possesses, when we take in St. Paul's sentence in the length and the breadth of it: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's Death till He come."

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

July 11, 1858.

MATTHEW XVI. 24-28.

"THEN SAID JESUS UNTO HIS DISCIPLES, IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT: AND WHOSOEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE SHALL FIND IT. FOR WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL? FOR THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH HIS ANGELS; AND THEN HE SHALL REWARD EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THERE BE SOME STANDING HERE, WHICH SHALL NOT TASTE OF DEATH, TILL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM."

LAST Sunday I endeavoured to show you that we might arrive at a true idea of the purpose and effects of the Lord's Supper, if we began with considering that it shows or declares the Lord's death till He come. I foresaw an objection to this statement, a very practical objection, one which would be felt by many who could not present it clearly to others or to themselves. "Do we not frequent Christ's Table for the sake of our own souls? Is it not said, *Ex-*

cept ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you? Does not the minister, as he gives the elements, speak to each man of *his* body and soul, of Christ having died for *him?* Supposing it be a duty to declare Christ to men, does not this language point out an entirely different duty, one which has reference to ourselves, to our own personal salvation? Does it not indicate a belief that the death which we may, in a certain sense, acknowledge to be for all men, is in its highest, indeed, in its only worthy or important, sense, for him who can appropriate it, who can say, 'I have proofs and signs within me which the majority have not, that I belong to Christ'?"

My brethren, there is so much of what I believe to be profoundly Christian and true, so much of what I believe to be essentially anti-Christian and false, mixed in the thoughts and feelings which give rise to those questions, that I dare not attempt, by any art of mine, to distinguish the one from the other. But they have been distinguished by the divinest skill. Our Lord Himself has undertaken the office —His own proper office—of dividing the wheat in them from the chaff. No one will doubt that *some* of the words I have just read to you set forth, as strongly as words can set forth, the preciousness of the soul, and the worthlessness of the whole world in comparison with it. They are *the* words to which every preacher refers who wishes to enforce this reflec-

tion upon his hearers. But he must not, I conceive, for the sake of pressing a certain argument, still less for the sake of finding a convenient motto to a sermon, divide sentences which Christ has joined together, and which evidently illustrate each other. He must be especially jealous of himself, if he is tempted to that course by the notion that he should perhaps weaken the effect of his own exhortations if he suffered another part of his Master's exhortation to be heard. The least suspicion of such a motive should make him tremble for his honesty and faithfulness, and should lead him earnestly to meditate on the whole discourse.

For none of us can boast that *he* may not yield to this temptation, seeing that our translators, excellent men as they were, have certainly yielded to it in their rendering of this passage. They knew that the word which they called "life" in the 25th verse, was the same word which they called "soul" in the 26th. They were afraid to say, that if a man loses his soul he shall save it; that sounded dangerous doctrine. They were afraid to diminish the force of the tremendous inquiry, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world," by reducing "soul" into "life." So they took a course which, when one thinks with *Whose* words they were occupied, must be called not one of cowardly compromise, but of desperate hardihood. They destroyed the coherency of the passage; they dared to make Him who spake as

never man spake, play with words as the juggling rhetoricians of the earth play with them. It is a solemn warning of a peril to which we are all exposed, the peril of thinking we are wiser than God, and better able to guard His truth than He is.

I. There can be no doubt that the first verse of the passage contains the subject of it. St. Peter had made his confession, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" That confession had drawn forth the divinest benediction and promise on the disciple who uttered it and on the Church. "*From that time forth began Jesus to shew to His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and must suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*" Those who knew that He was the Son of the living God, were also to know by what acts He would establish his Sonship. But Peter, to whom the one truth had been revealed, "*not by flesh and blood, but by the Father in Heaven,*" was trusting flesh and blood about the other. "*He took Jesus, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But He turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*" No soft language was possible here. He who was to open the kingdom of heaven to men, could not open it if he did not understand that the King was to en-

dure the sharpness of death. The latter speech annulled the former. From a glorious witness of Christ, he became His adversary. A notable example and foreshadowing of changes as sudden that were to take place in after-ages of the Church; to take place from the same causes. Later ministers of Christ, like St. Peter, would be puffed up with vanity because they had received a divine testimony to the truth of words which they had spoken under the force of a divine conviction. Later ministers would trust their intellects to draw conclusions as to what *must be*, from the discovery that had been made to them of what *is*; and so they, too, would rebuke Christ for His own words, and would receive in their consciences a withering rebuke from Him.

But our Lord was not content with announcing that His own sacrifice was necessary to the fulfilment of His character as a son. He had come to be the first-born of many brethren: He had come that they might be adopted into His family, and might bear the tokens of adoption. Therefore, *He said unto the disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* The force of the words *deny himself* was to be learnt from Him; it could be learnt only from Him. He had habitually, in every word, in every act, said, "*I can do nothing of my own self. The Son doeth what he seeth the Father do. The words that I speak are not of myself. The Father doeth the works.*" From the day of His

temptation, when He refused to prove Himself the Son of God by doing any work to support Himself, or to make His power manifest, or to take possession of His kingdom,—from day that forwards to His death, He was practising this self-denial, and so was revealing the Father to men. The Cross was the gathering up of all that previous sacrifice. It was the consummate surrender of Himself to the Will of His Father; it expressed the meaning of His life. And having proved this to be the true life of man,—the law of human life,—he called upon men to enter into it with Him. No one could follow Him on any other terms; each one might follow Him and claim his place as a son of God upon these terms. Self-denial was not to be an occasional act; it is the ground of man's existence, for it is the ground of His; the Cross was to be taken up each day, not as a meritorious service, but as submission to a law which it was monstrous to violate.

II. If we assume this as the starting-point of the discourse, we are prepared for the general announcement in the following verse: "*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*" I quite admit that there is a difficulty in the word ψυχή which the study even of the most accomplished philosophers might not remove, nay, which might not be altogether removed by the study of the New Testament. The translators, supposing they had mastered the Greek speculations on the subject, might still remain in doubt whether the

name denoted the life which animals have in common with men; or the intellectual life in contradistinction to the animal life; or that consciousness of personal existence and personal identity which, being simple and indivisible, cannot, the sages say, undergo the dissolution to which composite things are liable. And they might well have recollected that the word is not a favourite, either in the Gospels or Epistles; that it occurs seldom, and that the cognate adjective is used by St. Paul in a somewhat disparaging sense, as opposed to spiritual. Had they therefore adhered consistently to the word 'life' or to the word 'soul,' we could have had no fault to find with them. But they could not surely read the previous verse,—they could not refer to the parallel passage in St. Luke,—without perceiving that, whatever may be the technical signification of ψυχή, either in profane or sacred literature, it is used by our Lord as equivalent to *Self*. Whatever is included in Self is denoted by it here. Call it Life if you will, but then it must be the entire life of the man, so far as he is an individual; it must mean, whatever distinguishes him from his fellows. *This* is what will be lost by those who would save it; *this* is what will be found by those who are content to lose it.

The words "*for my sake,*" in the opinion of some, qualify the sentence. "Give you your life," it has been supposed to mean, "for Christ's sake, then He will save your soul." The martyrs of the first ages

acted, we are sometimes told, upon this calculation. They abandoned what they knew could only last for a few years, that they might obtain a future and permanent treasure. There may be expressions in the letters and exhortations of some of them, which suggest such a thought; they may have even used language at the scaffold or the stake upon which *we* can put this interpretation. But take their acts as the commentary upon their discourses; receive their devotions as a part, and the most authoritative part, of their discourses; make some allowances for the false colouring which may be thrown over one or the other by the eye of a cold spectator, who has not caught any of their inspiration; and I think it will be evident enough that they gave their bodies to be burnt or crucified, because they had first given up their whole selves to Christ. If they were not ready, like the Master, to pour out their souls as well as their bodies to death, they confessed this as a weakness and a sin, as a want of full participation in His sacrifice. Till this reluctance was taken from them, there would still be a shrinking from the Cross; possibly to it, more than to any other cause, we may ascribe the recantations and compromises of those who failed in the last hour.

I am not even as willing as some are, to think that the eagerness of men in the Middle Ages to become soldiers of the Cross, was owing chiefly to the notion that they might avert the future punishment of their

crimes by incurring the present risk of death for the sake of Christ. I admit that that motive did intrude itself, and was turned to shameful account by priests and popes, who supposed that sinful men were capable of no other. And I beseech those who in this day would invoke the same selfish instincts for the sake of rousing men to the acts which *they* deem religious, earnestly to consider whether they may not be abetting the immorality which they say, and say with the best possible evidence, that the sacerdotal artifices of those days fearfully promoted. But the brave and true deeds which mingled with that immorality cannot have had the same origin as the evil which defiled them. They came, I think, from a sense in men's hearts, that a common Saviour and Lord, to Whom they might give up body and soul, in Whose purity and righteousness they might hide their own dark selves, Who had gone into death and the grave for the sake of saints and sinners, would not refuse any who desired to claim a share in His Cross and Sepulchre. Such a belief, amidst whatever confusions, under whatever sensual forms, dwelt deep in the hearts of many whom we look upon from our serene heights with pity and scorn. Would to God that it might take possession of us! Would to God that we might learn, through any discipline, the right, the privilege, the necessity, of losing ourselves,—not a part of ourselves, but the whole,—for the sake of Christ,—that His human sympathies might drive out

our self-seeking, that the Divine nature of the second Adam might destroy in us the sordid nature of the first Adam!

III. Then we shall feel with quite another force the two awful inquiries in the next verse: "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

Few of us have so high an ambition as that which this text speaks of; at least, few of us think that we have. We do not want to gain the whole world. We only want some little portion of it; a very little, we suppose, would satisfy us. We have set our minds upon some special end, such as money or reputation, or on some general end, which we describe as success or happiness. In finding these, we expect to find ourselves. The soul which thirsts for them will take its ease and be merry when it has got them. But it is hard work to get them; much must be given up before the prize is won. What must be given up? Our Lord says, the very thing which we are seeking to save or to find. The soul must be given up. For the sake of the money, the reputation, the success, the happiness, the man must part with himself. Does He mean, "The soul must be lost hereafter? It must perish in another world"? Oh, brethren, does He not mean something more fearful still than that; something which makes that fear real and definite, apart from which it would be very vague, and might be easily put

away? Does He not tell us that the soul is lost *here?* Does He not lead us to recollect what we have seen, what we do see continually? Look at the pleasure-hunter, the gold-hunter, the fame-hunter. It is all the same. The thing sought for is won, or almost won. But where is the winner? Alas! the price has been paid beforehand. The debtor's person was responsible. The life which was to be enjoyed when all was acquired, has gone in the acquisition.

And so the first question answers itself, "What is the man profited if he gain the whole world and lose himself," or "his own soul"? Nothing depends on the quantity of the good which is realized. No amount added to the gold, the pleasure, the fame, can make the slightest difference. The man has devoted himself, sacrificed himself; what is the world to him? Oh! look at the jaded, helpless, hopeless faces which are set before us, in any authentic, recognized picture of a great day of self-seeking enjoyment; look at the worn-out, miserable, anxious faces in any picture, of those who have spent their existence in self-seeking business; and there read the true sermon on our Lord's words. I do not speak of the day after the pleasure. I speak of the day itself. I do not speak of the failures which cast money-getters from their thrones. I would confine myself to the time when the world worships them. Meditate on *that;* and then on the words, "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

But there is another question, "*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" We sometimes fancy, I suspect, that this sentence is only a repetition of the former. We sometimes read it as if it were written, "What shall a man *get* in exchange for his soul?" But our Lord does not speak unnecessary words, or words in a perverted sense. I apprehend that the question, "What can I give in exchange for my soul?" is one which we have all at times asked. "I do not wish to give my whole self to pleasure or to money. It is, no doubt, my main pursuit, my chief end. But I fully expect to reserve something from that occupation; some energies, some conscience, some affection, some hope." It will not do; the divinity I have chosen will not be served on such conditions. There can be no bargaining. "Thyself, thyself," he says, "I must have. Nothing less than that. Nothing but that." So again, when a man has perceived that there is another Being to Whom he owes homage, One Whose nature is altogether different from that which he has been worshiping in his heart, he considers with himself: "I must have offended Him. How can I pacify Him? What will He accept? My soul is another's. But what can I give in exchange for my soul? Calves of a year old? Rivers of oil? The first-born of my body?" All experiments are made; none succeed. *This* God, He claims thyself. Nothing else will satisfy Him. "My son, give me thy heart. If not that, I care for nothing else."

IV. But what relation is there between this sentence and the next? "*For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His Angels, and then shall He reward every man according to his works.*"

The relation between the sentences arises from the relation between the man who is spoken of in the first, and the Son of Man, Who is the subject of the other. The self-seeker has been separating himself from his kind—from his race,—or has only been using the members of it as instruments for obtaining his own ends. He has forgotten *the* Man, the Son of Man, the bond of the whole race, Who has given Himself a Sacrifice for all the members of it. The man who has given up himself has done so *for Christ's sake*; because he believes in a Son of Man, because he knows that he is not a separate creature, because he does not wish in death or life to be divided from Him Who died for all and Who lives for all.

It is clear that out of these opposite states of mind the most opposite acts must proceed. Not as if either class laid down for itself a certain scheme of conduct. Not as if the one were deliberately neglectful of all duties and charities, and the other were minutely and scrupulously observant of them. But the spirit of self-seeking, when it obtains the mastery over any human being, of course moulds his thoughts and his deeds; the Spirit of the Son of Man of course moulds the thoughts and acts of each human being who sub-

mits to His government. Therefore, when it is said that the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father and of the Angels, and shall reward every man according to his works, we understand that one of these principles, and each act that has issued from it, will be shown to be eternally false, and the other eternally true; that Christ will prove before the Universe that He accounts the lowest of those creatures, whom the self-seekers have despised or only regarded as their tools, whom the self-deniers have honoured, as His brethren; and that whatever has been done to any one of them has been done to Him.

V. I dare not omit the last verse in this great discourse, though it may not seem essential to my purpose, since our Lord introduces it with so much solemnity: "*Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*" I do not see how we can give to that announcement any other meaning than the one which is ordinarily given to it. There were some—St. John at least must have been present—who would stay on earth till the downfall of the city and temple over which Jesus had wept, till those who had rejected Him were scattered through the earth. But why should these events, in themselves so sad and portentous, be signs that the Kingdom of the Son of Man was come? I apprehend, because the ground on which the Jews withstood the preaching of our Lord and of His

Apostles was precisely this, that He appeared not only as the Heir of David, but as the Son of Man; that people of all nations were claimed as children of God in Him, along with those who boasted they were children of Abraham; that His death was shown forth as the death for mankind. The downfall of the exclusive nation was therefore an authentic testimony that a Kingdom was established, which, however little the rulers of the earth might confess it, however little its nature might be understood by those who nominally belonged to it, could have no meaner title than this, "*the Kingdom of the Son of Man.*"

VI. To that Kingdom we, my brethren, belong. When we are received into it by Baptism we renounce our private, individual, selfish life; we claim, as St. Paul says, to die with Christ, to be buried with Christ; we affirm that there is no life but the life of the Son of Man; we ask, for ourselves and for our children, that we may be quickened with that life. That first Sacrament, then, is framed upon our Lord's universal and everlasting maxim, "*He that saveth his life,*" his own separate life, "*shall lose it; he that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it.*" In that Sacrament we declare that there is a common death for all men, a common life for all men; for ourselves and for our households, we say that we will have no other.

The words, "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of*

man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," are a repetition and enforcement of that maxim for those who are engaged in the hard battle of the world. They remind us of the daily, hourly temptation to be seeking a life of our own, to be forgetting that we are bound by the eternal law of God, by the unchangeable conditions of our own being, to our fellows, and to their Father and ours, in the Well-beloved Son. These words remind us that the selfish life is in truth no life at all, but death; that to choose it is to choose death. They remind us that we are not bound to choose it; that in doing so we are renouncing our true human state; we are trying to cast off bonds which are actually holding us; we are resisting God's Spirit. They remind us that the common life is still with us; that the Son of Man is still the same; that His flesh and His blood were really given for the life of the world; that our spirits groan for that life, groan to be delivered from the death into which they have fallen through self-pleasing and self-seeking.

VII. When, then, a man hears the invitation to the Lord's Supper,—when he is bidden to eat the common bread and drink the common wine,—what should be his thoughts? Should they be these: "Here is a way of saving myself; here is a privilege granted to me because I am better than others; here is an opportunity of putting myself in a higher condition than others?" Or should they be these: "I have

lost myself by trying to save myself; I have been asserting special privileges on some ground of special fortune or special merit. And the fortune and the merit have vanished, I know not what is become of them. I have been trying to lift myself above other men. Oh, God! that I might at last be permitted to be one of them, to feel with them, to suffer with them! And here is the message that I may have this great and wonderful gift. Christ bids my spirit partake of the flesh and blood which He shed for the world, as my body partakes of the bread and wine. It is what I need. It takes away the selfish glory which I have coveted; it invests me with the human glory which I have renounced. It bids me cast away that weight of cares about my body and my soul which have become intolerable; it bids me throw myself upon that sacrificing love which provides for all and for each, which seeks to make me its minister to others, which can never bless me so much as by forming me after its own likeness."

Yes! it is about losing ourselves that we are to think; the finding we leave to Christ. It is, indeed, necessary to remember that what we lose we shall find, lest we should fall into pantheistic dreams about an absorption of all personal life and distinctness into the great Whole or into the Divine Nature. No such notions will torment us, or at least will overcome us, while we believe in a Son of Man, Who gave His soul and body to death; but Who brought

out of death both His body and soul; Who ascended with both to the right-hand of His Father. While we celebrate the sacrifice of His death, while we thank Him that we are made in the likeness of that death, we may look forward to a time when we shall be made in the likeness of His resurrection. No one precious energy or affection which He has bestowed can be meant to perish. Our personal being is safe when we entrust it to Him. We do not enter into the fullness of His sacrifice if we are considering how we may save our bodies or our souls. But when we have resigned ourselves to Him, His minister may say to us in His name, "*The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee* because thou art a man,—*the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee* because thou art a man, *preserve thy body and soul unto eternal life.*"

If there has been a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction made for the sins of the whole world, we may trust that the Father who has accepted that sacrifice will draw our spirits, however sunken they may be in evil, to His Son; that He will at last draw all men to Him. If there has been no such sacrifice for the world,—if men may dare to speak of it as a sacrifice nominally for all, really for a very few,—then we have nothing to feed upon; then no Son of Man has come, no Son of Man will come; then there is no power which can raise us out of the pit of selfishness; then prayers,

offerings, all the machinery of religious worship, will only plunge us more deeply into it; then there is no Eternal Life, for that is the fruition of the Divine Love; but there is an Eternal Death, for *that* is communion with the Spirit of Selfishness, *that* is subjection to him.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

July 18, 1858.

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2 Corinthians xiii. 14.

"THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH YOU ALL."

With these words we conclude our daily prayer, morning and evening. Doubtless the compilers of our Service thought that they expressed the deepest ground of Prayer, its inmost meaning, its most perfect result. I have chosen them today, because I hope we may find in them the solution of a difficulty concerning the relation of Prayer to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is besetting some very earnest minds, not wont to occupy themselves with mere trifles of controversy. "Can we say," it has been asked, "that the presence of our Lord, which is promised in the Eucharist, is a presence of a different kind from that which a faithful Christian may expect in ordinary prayer?" The negative answer is given very decidedly by some who have no dream of disparaging the Sacrament, but who are greatly afraid of converting it into a charm; who are sure

that they shall lower its power and dignity if they diminish its truth. Possibly their proposition, as they state it, seems to them almost incontrovertible. But it does encounter a strong opposition, one, I think, which is entitled to the highest possible respect, one which involves and asserts a truth that cannot safely be set aside or tampered with. What I mean may be more intelligible, and the whole subject relieved of some of its embarrassment, if we consider, not what is demanded for the honour of the Eucharist, but what is demanded that prayer may be Christian and effectual.

I. When I speak of Christian prayer as different from other prayer, what do I intend? Are we to count all the cries that have been ascending from the multitude of sorrowing creatures in all parts of the world as nothing? Are we to suppose that they have not entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, the true Lord, because they may have been addressed in blindness and ignorance to the gods many and lords many who are His servants and creatures? If St. Paul speaks of the travailing groans of unconscious nature as prophetic of a Divine birth, of a glorious manifestation, can we suppose that the most confused, bewildered utterance of one of those whom God has made in His own image is unheeded by Him? If in this sense we oppose Christian prayer to Hindoo prayer, to Mahometan prayer, to the prayer of the darkest savage, I must hold that we set aside

the express declarations of Scripture, the essential doctrine and glad tidings of the New Testament.

Yes! for the New Testament teaches me that I do not pray by virtue of any excellence that is in me,—that I am not listened to because I am better than others in my belief or conduct,—but that I pray by "*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" My nature struggles hard to win certain blessings for itself. Whence or from whom I procure them I care not. I suppose they are conferred by some of the objects which my eye sees, or by some unseen Power that thinks as I think, acts as I act. I measure that Power by the dimensions of my own intellect. I judge Him by the qualities of my own heart. I divide Him according to my apprehensions. His mind and mine are evidently at discord on many points; else why do not things turn out as I would have them turn out? I must move Him by some means—by hard entreaty, by bribes that He will probably approve—to take my view of things, to overlook my disagreement with Him. This is the prayer of the selfish nature; the prayer of Jew, Turk, Hindoo, Christian, just so far as he yields to that nature.

We have all yielded to this nature. At times it has made us thoroughly torpid; it has taught us to look upon prayer as ridiculous and impossible; it has mocked all aspirations; it has been merely a gravitation towards death. At times it has been full of restless wishes and restless fears. It would listen to

the priest of any faith; it would adopt any suggestion about the method of penetrating the iron or brass of which the heavens seemed to be composed; it would urge any sacrifices if it could but escape some threatened calamity.

Should not this experience of prayer as the greatest of all contradictions, as the greatest of all necessities, lead us to understand that there is a power which is seeking to rouse us out of the sleep of Nature, to deliver us from its fever; a power gentle and penetrating,—of which the dew is the Scriptural and the most suitable emblem;—a power acting upon our wills,—a power which is continually stimulating them to claim their place among their kindred spirits, among the sons of God? Such a power all men have felt. It has come to them in hours of shameful degradation, when they were stooping to the state of animals, reminding them of another destiny, speaking to them in another language from that of their enchanter, bidding them leave the sty in which so many of their companions have been transformed. It has come to them in hours of sorrow, consoling them for trials, bracing them to effort and hope. It has taught them to receive from earth and sky, which had once looked on them with leaden indifference, messages of sympathy and friendship. It has given them glimpses of a world of order and peace which they might inhabit. It has taught them to murmur the words, "Our Father which art in Heaven," when they

felt most tied and bound to earth, most tempted to think of themselves only as children of earth.

I say all men have been aware of these impulses, and prayer—not a selfish prayer to win certain gifts, to overcome the Divine reluctance, but trusting, humble, confessing prayer—has been the fruit of them. Who have offered such prayers we cannot know, and are not concerned to know. We ought to know—it is our privilege to know—whence the inspiration to utter them proceeds. We ought to know—the name we bear implies the knowledge—that it does not descend upon us casually, from some distant, unknown being, from some benevolent genius; that it is the action upon our spirits, the calm, regular action, of the Son of Man and the Son of God, in Whose likeness we are created, Who has taken our flesh, Who has redeemed us to be partakers of His filial life and His filial throne. When once we have learnt His name, when once we have confessed His authority, and have apprehended the character of it, we cannot confine it by any partial rules of ours. To suppose the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ absent from any age or any set of circumstances becomes difficult, all but impossible, to those who ascribe every good thing to that grace, who cannot conceive how men could exist a day or a moment, if they were left to themselves and the wayward impulses of their own nature. They are sure, therefore, that they are entrusted with a Gospel

to all nations concerning this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are sure that they are to teach all nations what their instinct of prayer means, by teaching them what Christ has done for them, what He is doing with them. But then they must ask themselves, "*How* are we to teach this lesson? *How* are we to testify to the everlasting truth of His word, '*Lo, I am with you*'? *How* are we to assure *ourselves* that it has not come to naught, since we are continually fancying that it has come to naught?" The answer to these questions, it seems to me, is not Prayer simply, but the Holy Communion. That festival clears the mists from the nature of prayer, by bearing such a witness of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as prayer alone cannot bear. That gives the Christian significance to prayer, by declaring that the origin of all thoughts which ascend from us to God is in Him Who descended from God to us; by presenting His Divine Sacrifice as the only interpretation of our relations to God, as the only ground of our devotion to God; by setting Him forth as the living bond of all Spirits to the Father of Spirits. I am greatly afraid that if we measure this Sacrament by our prayers, instead of referring our prayers to it as *their* measure, we shall leave our evil hearts a plea for putting their own efforts and strivings in the place of Christ's grace, and so shall lose the faith of His presence in one service as much as the other.

II. We sometimes limit the idea of the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ to His *Forgiveness*. And no wonder. For the sense of daily resistance to goodness and gentleness, of indifference to sympathy, of refusal to follow where He would lead us, may well induce us to comprehend all other blessings under this one.

In another and fuller sense He teaches us to connect grace with forgiveness: "*If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.*" We are startled at the words. We think that, after all, God's mercy is not the source of our good deeds, but the consequence of them. But if the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the continual influence and operation of a forgiving Mind upon ours, cannot we understand, do we not feel, that an unforgiving habit is precisely *the* thing which opposes itself to that operation, with which that Mind *cannot* hold intercourse? We stand aloof from the Divine Forgiveness, we will not have it; we prefer a state of alienation from it. Are we not doing better, therefore,—are we not exhibiting greater faith in the power of Christ to remove all obstacles out of His way,—when we ask Him to cast the unforgiving spirit out of us,—than if we asked Him to bestow all possible gifts upon us without that? Does not the apparent condition afford us a brighter glimpse than we had before of the freedom and the fulness of His mercy?

And so we are able to go on to the next clause in

St. Paul's sentence, and to consider what that has to do with our prayers, "*The Love of God.*" The selfish nature asks for some definite thing with which it dreams that it shall be satisfied. He Who would bestow upon His children the bread which they need, not the stones which they crave for, sends His grace that they may be drawn into an infinite region, that they may aspire after an infinite blessing. This forgiveness which is manifested to me, this human tenderness which meets me and contrasts so strangely with my own dryness and coldness, this just and wise discipline which is not stopped by my crying from doing that which it designs to do on my behalf,—whence does it flow? So far as it stirs me to prayer, it stirs me to seek for its own origin. Prayer is the incessant demand, "Source of all life and goodness, where art Thou? It is Thyself and not any of Thy treasures that I need. Take them away if Thou wilt not reveal Thyself while I possess them. Take them away if they hinder me from receiving the revelation of Thyself." Thus the grace of the Son, the more it works upon men and in men,—the more it urges them to look for something beyond itself, deeper than itself; for that which is not ours; for that which we cannot take in; for that which has been, and is, and is to come. Not as if the fullest discovery of the Love which embraces all things, could ever make the definite personal grace less necessary or less dear. The Son will come out in more distinctness, both as

the Man of Sorrows and as the Word by Whom all things were created, as we are taught Whose will He came on earth to do, into Whose glory He entered when He ascended on high. His Cross and Passion will be then more than ever regarded as *the* Revelation of the Godhead, as that upon which the spirit of man must dwell if it would not lose God, or see Him separated again into idol forms, distorted by its own terrors. The Universe will be welcomed as beautiful and harmonious because it reflects some portions of the Image, which was seen altogether in the weakness of Gethsemane, and the desertion of Calvary. The man will turn from his own lonely experiences to those facts of history, because they declare, not a partial love,—a love to him and to a few Christians,—but Love itself, the very Nature of God.

St. Paul was writing to a Church. He desired that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ might be with them all, with the whole body, with each member of it. But that body was a body of witnesses; each member of it was to be a witness in his own sphere and degree. Of what was the Church at large, of what were those who composed it to bear witness?—Of a God Who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son for it. Unless they fulfilled this function, they could not overthrow the false gods of the heathens about them, they could not bear any effectual protest against Jewish incredulity and exclusiveness. The Church of Corinth was especially liable to

forget this function. St. Paul had written two Epistles to tell them why. They were gathering round special leaders; they were forming sects; they were making Christ Himself the Head of a sect. They were glorifying themselves on their spiritual privileges and gifts; on those which especially belonged to them as Christians, men anointed with the Spirit. They were acting carnally and sensually. They were meeting together for the common Christian Feast; they were turning it into a symbol of their want of fellowship. The Apostle exposes all these symptoms of a deeply-seated disease. But he does not try to extirpate it by telling the patient that he has overrated the greatness of his position. He tells the Corinthians that all things are theirs, Paul, Cephas, Apollos, life, death, because they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Nothing is too good for them, if they will receive it as a universal, not as a particular or exclusive good. And so, in strict consistency with what has gone before, he concludes with saying, not merely, "*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" but "*the Love of God, be with you.*" The highest inheritance of angels is for you sinful Corinthians,—that Love which is above all, around all, beneath all. You may ascend into it as Christ has ascended.—What arguments against sectarianism and exclusiveness could be such a blow to them as this magnificent invitation?

But if Prayer requires the Love of God as its deepest foundation, as its ultimate end, certainly some-

thing is required to show that prayer *has* this foundation, can attain to this end. It is apt, we see, to take its colour from the mind of him who offers it. It is apt to stop far short of its true goal. The petitioner forgets the common blessing in the special one, the essential glory in the accidental. What is to recall him to the truth? The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper carries with it the assurance that a Love higher than heaven, deeper than hell, has worked, is working, will not cease working, to overcome the schismatical tendencies of human beings; that it will not let them pursue separate objects; that it will not allow them to rest till they have found the one object. Does not the Eucharist, on this ground also, rise above Prayer, inasmuch as it speaks directly of God and what He is, and of men as all miserable alike without Him, all blessed alike in the fruition of Him?

III. St. Paul concludes his benediction with "*the Communion of the Holy Ghost.*" Whensoever any Apostle spoke of *the Christ*, he took pains to show that he meant "*the Anointed of God*," "*He that anoints men with the Holy Spirit.*" From the day in which John came preaching in the wilderness, this had been declared to be the sign of the expected Deliverer and King, the power with which He would work, the gift by which He would raise men to another level, to the condition of creatures "*born not of flesh or of blood, or of the will of man, but of God.*" But was not all that could be said of this power and blessing implied in the

previous words, "*the Grace of Christ*," "*the Love of God*"? *Implied*, surely. Implied it had been in every announcement and discovery of the Old Dispensation; in the song of every Psalmist; in the sympathy of every Ruler and Prophet with the purposes of God, and with the misery of those who resisted Him. A Spirit was in the midst of the nation. A Spirit was speaking in its seers; setting before them visions of sorrow and visions of glory; helping them to struggle on, when all looked darkest, in the certainty of an approaching light. But the Spirit had not been manifested; these men of the old time were waiting for His manifestation. Till the Desire of Nations was manifested in the flesh, *this* desire could not be accomplished. When it was accomplished,—when the day of Pentecost had declared that there was a communion for all nations, because there was a Spirit to bind all nations into the Name of the Father and the Son, those names could be uttered as they had never been uttered before;—it was possible to speak of the Grace of One Who entered into all the weakness of men without lessening the awe of the Godhead. The Holiest of the Holiest had been opened, and a mystery of Love had been revealed, as that which no loveless creature had been able to look into. This grace and love, then, did not absorb, though they involved, that Communion of the Holy Ghost through which the apprehension of them as eternally distinct, as eternally one, became possible to human beings. If that Communion were

lost, the grace and the love would again be hidden; the message to the nations would be set at naught; the world would shrivel again into its old narrowness, would be split into its old divisions.

Those conditions of the Church of Corinth to which I have alluded, indicated the possibility of strifes in the Christian Community, the same in fact as those which had torn nations and families in pieces from the beginning, but going nearer to the heart's core of humanity,—more inward and deadly. Especially the fact that they were quarrelling about the gifts of the Spirit, and the degree in which one or another of their teachers and factions could claim them, was a gloomy prophecy, at the commencement of the new age, of the triumphs which the Evil Spirit would achieve in each period of it. But was it not possible to dive a yard below his mines? Could there be no counter-prophecy of his final discomfiture? That deeper mine, that counter-prophecy lies in the words, "*Communion* of the Holy Ghost." The *gifts* of the Holy Ghost were turned into occasions of contention and self-glorification. Who could speak with most tongues? Who could enact most wonders? The *graces* of the Spirit, though humility and meekness are the most conspicuous of them, could be pleaded as reasons for despising others, as the motives to saintly pride. The divine words of St. Paul, "*They that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of His*," might in after-days be turned into an argument for drawing deep lines

around those who could say of themselves, "*We* have the Spirit of Him Who made Himself of no reputation, who was the friend of publicans and sinners; stand by; *you* have it not." But if the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Communion, if that is His distinction from the Spirit of Unholiness, the Spirit of hatred and lies, these subtleties of that Spirit are detected and laid bare. It is shown for what end his Divine Adversary has been working from the first, how all efforts to divide have brought out more fully His fusing energy; how men, in spite of themselves, have been held together; how life and unity presume and demand each other; how certainly a living Unity will at last supersede all dead uniformity; how it will confound all experiments to restore vitality to the limbs by rending asunder the body.

That Christ has come for *this* end, that for *this* end He was baptized with the Spirit, the Holy Communion testifies by its very title. No prayers, disjoined from this Sacrament, can represent the blessing of communion, the curse of division, as this Sacrament does. Carry the meaning of the Eucharist into your public worship, regard the Eucharist as the centre of it, and worship becomes a reality; it points to self-abnegation, to the united service of the Eternal Father. Carry the meaning of the Sacrament into private worship, and private worship becomes indeed an act of communion with a present Lord. But try this communion by the standard of our public or

private worship, and it is in danger of sinking, as they so easily and naturally sink, into mere utterances of our own wishes, or mere repetitions of words which we have received from tradition.

It is a common way of meeting questions of the kind I have considered in this sermon, to say that they are merely questions of words. It seems to me an irritating and not a satisfactory way. If the assertion is well founded, precious realities may lie under questions of words. It is more helpful to try if we cannot bring out the realities, than to assume their absence. But it is not a question of words whether Christ is really present with us at all times, and whether the Lord's Supper is not a true Sacrament because He has appointed it to remind us of His Presence. Those who hold that conviction are bound to proclaim it, and therefore to vindicate all modes of intercourse with Christ,—in the awfulness of prayer, in the daily charities of life, as well as the intercourse in the Sacrament. I think they fail to defend that noble position, if they refuse to admit the principle for which their opponents are struggling, that this Sacrament transcends the other modes of intercourse. Place it on the same level with them,—forget that it is the specially Christian ordinance,—and they, I think, *must* become weak, *may* become false. No! the strife is not a verbal one; but the more each party understands the thing, the substance, for which it is contending, the more justice it will do to the

thing, the substance, for which the other is contending. So Unity in the Church, which we sometimes despair of, may come out of the contentions which are rending it. So we may receive those words as addressed to us, the feeble fighters on earth in these latter days, by St. Paul and the triumphant society of which he is a member: "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*"

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

(NOT PREACHED.)

July 25, 1858.

REVELATION II. 17.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA, AND WILL GIVE HIM A WHITE STONE, AND IN THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN, WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH SAVING HE THAT RECEIVETH IT."

THERE is one topic closely connected with those upon which I have been speaking to you for three Sundays, that at this time especially must not be passed over. We hear much of *Confession;* many questions whether a clergyman of the Church is not bound to encourage and establish the formal practice of it; many debates about the limits within which it is to be exercised; many assertions that there is a demand for it among the laity. We hear vehement denunciations of the least approach to a Confessional; passionate appeals to the experience of other nations against it; a cry that it may be hindered by the arm of the State, if it cannot be checked by an expression of opinion. There is, of course, abundance of frivolous talk on one side

or the other, which must be borne as a penance when we cannot avoid it. There are also many earnest feelings and thoughts on both sides: these may, by God's grace, be separated from the vanity which surrounds them; they may become clear and distinct; at last they may be brought to work in harmony, not in opposition.

I. For us in England it is a helpful circumstance that the controversy turns principally on a single passage in the exhortation to the Communion. I will quote it:—

"And because it is requisite that no man shall "come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust "in God's mercy and with a quiet conscience; there- "fore if there be any of you who by this means can- "not quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth "further comfort and counsel, let him come to me or "to some discreet and honest minister of God's word, "that by the ministry of God's word he may receive "the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly "counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience "and avoiding of all scruples and doubtfulness."

Those who are arguing that the Church of England gives very slight encouragement to the practice of Confession, as it is understood in other countries, naturally dwell on the fact that this is the only staff of their opponents. "Supposing," they say, "it "is to be an institution,—an institution affecting, as "it must needs do, the whole life of our society,—

"would all notice of it have been confined to one of "our services,—would it have occurred at the close "of an address which is but read occasionally, for "which another may be substituted?" They are entitled to any advantage they can derive from this consideration. It is an important one: it ought not to be overlooked. Again it may be said by the same persons, "That neither the word *confessional*, nor even "the word *confession*, is used in this passage; that "there is merely a general direction as to the duty of "quieting uneasy or scrupulous consciences; that the "minister is spoken of much more as a friendly ad-"viser than as an authoritative spiritual director." This remark, again, is worthy of all attention, as any exact criticism upon a disputed sentence must needs be.

But there is something to be alleged on the other side. The Communion service is not merely *one* of our services, but, as I contended last Sunday, *the* service which gives the force and interpretation to all the rest. It is the centre of a Christian worship: with it all our worship stands or falls. "To connect "the Confessional with the Communion"—so the defender of it may speak—"is to give it the highest "honour you can give it. To treat it as a prepara-"tion for the Communion, is to treat it as the greatest "necessity of a Church. We ask no more,—we want "it in no other sense, for no other purpose, than that. "And if you insist on the absence of the word *con-"fession*," they may go on, "how do you account for

"the presence of another word which is far more "offensive to anti-sacerdotal ears—*absolution?* Is "that a power which can be ascribed to an ordinary "friend? Does it not belong emphatically to the "priest, as such?"

Allowing all weight to these apparently adverse reflections, I think those who put them forth will agree with me to this extent. They will acknowledge that the English Church—so far as we can gather her judgment from what she has omitted and what she has said—wishes us to derive our idea of the nature of Confession from the nature of Communion. She must mean us to turn away from all other methods of estimating its character, its value, its relation to the Christian life, however plausible; she must wish us steadily to ask ourselves, What is the signification of the Lord's Supper? How does that signification bear upon the signification, the utility, the necessity of Confession?

II. We have seen that a man may approach the Lord's table for two most opposite reasons. He may come to it because he thinks that Christ's death, of which it testifies, will deliver, or *may* deliver his individual soul from the fate to which his race is doomed. He may come to it, because he desires to lose his individual soul in Christ, to be a partaker of the death which He died for the world, of the Redemption which He obtained for the world. These conceptions of the end for which this ordinance was appointed—

of the blessings which it procures—are quite independent of any theories about the nature of the elements and the effect of consecration upon them. A Romanist, a Lutheran, a Zwinglian, may set either of these objects before him, and may reconcile it with his peculiar system. But I cannot help thinking that Romanists or Lutherans or Zwinglians who seek themselves, and not Christ, in the Eucharist, will have no real agreement even with the members of their own sect,—even with those who adopt precisely the same formula with them respecting transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or the memorial character of the feast; and that the Romanists, Lutherans, and Zwinglians who seek Christ there and not themselves, will be essentially one at heart, however widely different may be their statements and their intellectual conceptions.

Most of us, when we are first led to think of the Communion of the Lord's Supper, and of the duty of receiving it, are greatly confused between these two ends of life. A sense of having neglected our souls, or, as we sometimes express it, our religious interests, is the prominent one in our minds. But that vague general feeling is mingled with the remembrance of distinct acts done long ago, or done recently, which we long to blot out, and which have the stamp of eternity fixed upon them. The thoughts, "God knows that these things have been committed; God knows that *I* committed them; of *me* He will

require them; in the wide universe I shall be recognized as the author of them; I am certain that I shall;"—these thoughts create a sense of terror which may be strong at one time, weak at any other; which we have a mighty impulse to drown in any sights or sounds of the outer world; which we think we ought to cherish, to deepen, to make enduring. If we had merely *those* thoughts about the neglect of certain services which it behoved us to perform, we might run at once to the Communion, taking a certain credit to ourselves for repairing a past error, and beginning a new career more respectable in the eyes of religious men, more acceptable to our Judge. The other feelings give an entirely different character to that service: "Will it affect those acts of mine, those past acts? Will it put me in a different position with reference to them? I have heard of a wonderful, unutterable forgiveness; here it seems to be gathered up and expressed. Could I anyhow lay hold of that, —could I make it mine? Could it say to me, 'Those acts of yours shall not be remembered any more against you'? Would even that do unless it were able to make *me* something different? But is not this Communion very awful as well as hopeful? For the mere chance of a possible blessing, dare I incur the risk of deepening my evil and my curse? While I am invited, am I not also driven back? While I am bidden to come, for all things are ready, do not I hear that if I come unworthily I may increase my damnation?"

III. Here are materials enough to make the conscience unquiet; and such unquietness, the Church says, it is most desirable should be removed before a man come to the Lord's Supper. She lays it upon her ministers that they should use all the power and knowledge which have been given them for the purpose of removing it. Supposing, then, a person perplexed in the way I have described, should come to a minister,—how may he give evidence of that learning and discretion which are represented as his proper characteristics? First of all, surely, he ought to be clear himself about the purpose for which priests and laymen alike are bidden to eat the bread and drink the wine. Any confusion on this point will make the aid which he affords to the conscience utterly unsatisfactory. If, for instance, he has not settled it in his mind that when our Lord said, "He that saveth his life shall lose it; he that loseth it for My sake shall find it," He meant to lay down a universal maxim, the maxim of those who follow Him, *the* Gospel maxim,—if he does not see in this Sacrament the exposition and fulfilment of that maxim,—how will he treat his bewildered patient? Let the question proposed to him be simply this, "*What can I do to be saved?*" he will stumble at the simple answer which St. Paul made to the jailor at Philippi. He will not say boldly, "There is One in Whom you may believe, in Whom you may lose yourself. There is One Who is the same for all; the Lord and Saviour of sinners. To

Him you belong. Give yourself to Him." He will suppose that he must lay down a number of rules as to what a man must do, as to what he must believe, in order to be saved. And so he will frustrate the meaning, he will destroy the simplicity, of that great practical testimony to the Lord's death which the Communion supplies.

But if the anxiety of the person who is consulting him does not take this direct and comprehensive form, —and we cannot expect that in general it will,—if there should be certain special offences, great or little, which weigh down his soul; how will a minister, such as I have imagined, be likely to deal with the case? He will try to ascertain whether the acts which have been committed belong to the class of venial or of deadly sins. He will be aware that this point cannot be exactly settled by the most carefully arranged list, drawn up by the most refined casuists, of the two classes of transgressions. He must inform himself about the state of mind which led to the perpetration of one wrong act or another; he must weigh the amount of temptation. He does not aspire to make more than a very distant approximation to truth on these points; but he may, with the help of his books, directing him in a course of cross-examination, find out something which will assist his judgment. When so much is at stake,—in a matter concerning the safety of the soul,—it must surely, he thinks, be his business to search as far as he can, to penetrate into all the

closest and darkest passages through which evil has found an entrance. What accidental mischiefs which accompany the means ought not to be risked for the sake of the great, the transcendent result! It may strike him sometimes that among these mischiefs is included the revival of all those thoughts and feelings which prompted the wrong deed,—a return to the foul or revengeful imaginations in which it had its birth. He may have had experience—he has little acquaintance with himself if he has not—of the infinite deceptions which we commit when we try to analyze our own feelings in any bygone transaction, still more when we try to assign our part or another's part in the guilt of it. But the probability, the almost certainty, of all this impurity, all this falsehood, must be incurred,—the sleeping embers of past evils must be stirred up,—for how can the priest honestly give his absolution if he has not discovered, as well as he can, what is to be absolved?

I wish you to see how easily and naturally an English minister may slide into this course, not from any wrong intention, but from an earnest desire to follow what he supposes is the precept of his Church; not so much from a perverse theory of his own, as from too faithful an adherence to certain notions which have infected the Church generally, and which are perhaps quite as strong in the minds of many who denounce him as in his own. If on these he has grafted a high notion of the priestly authority, let

me endeavour to show him how little he can realize that notion, unless he strike into quite a different path from that on which he has entered.

IV. It is clear that his cross-examination has done nothing to fulfil the wishes expressed in our Exhortation. He has not quieted the conscience of the man or woman who has come to him. He has added exceedingly to its disquiet and confusion. It may be—it must be—a relief to tell any one of an act or a state of mind which we have kept shut up within us till we can endure the scorching agony of concealment no longer. But the priest, so far as he has tried to exercise his own proper function, has not, thus far, contributed in the very slightest degree to this relief; he has lessened it; he has made the perplexity, the torture, the inward *sin*, greater and heavier.

"Yes," it will be said, "but now his turn comes. Now he is to give the absolution which the Church speaks of." Oh no! Not *that* absolution! Not actual freedom of conscience! Not the loosing a burden too heavy to be borne. The priest is able to say certain words which betoken that he absolves. He dare not trust those words to do their work. He has himself the feeblest faith in their power. He must help them out by appeals to the senses. He must convey a vague notion to the fancy that he is a very wonderful person. Ultimately he will fall back on a certain theory that he has the right to absolve; that it *must* belong to him; that it *must* effect some-

thing;—all this because he has a secret conviction that by itself, without this assumption, it *does* effect nothing. Is this exalting priestly authority? Is this asserting the sacerdotal might? Are you not degrading that authority to the lowest point? Are you not bringing sacerdotal impotence into the fullest manifestation? Are you not making the conscience, which should own its force, cry out with indignation, as soon as it perceives that it has been tampered with, "What art thou?"

There is still another point which I would press on the minister who wishes to prepare penitents for the Communion. Is he *preparing* them? What are they to seek for there? If he has imparted to them any spiritual gift, it is that gift of which the Eucharist itself testifies. *His* idea of Absolution is a direct interference with the meaning of the Sacrament; not a theoretical more than a practical interference. The communicants' sins have been put away by his word. What, then, is that grievous and intolerable weight which they complain of when they kneel? What need have they of the general pardon which the priest announces? What need have they of the comfortable words which Christ speaks to those that are heavy laden? Draw what nice distinctions you please, if you are meeting the consciences of human beings,—not a thing which is called the Conscience in books of divinity or casuistry,—this question will force itself upon you, and you cannot evade it.

V. But does not this question also demand an answer from those who think that the Exhortation in our Service has an altogether different force from that which the confessional, ancient or modern, would give it? I think they should be able to give such an answer. I would try, earnestly and humbly—believing that Exhortation to be binding on me, believing that I ought to have complied with it far more than I have done,—to find what the answer is. And first of all, I think we too ought to understand, and continually to remind ourselves, that *our* offences are deeper in their nature, wider and more serious in their consequences, than any which those who seek relief at our hands can make known to us. Whosesoever offences are venial,—if *venial* is twisted from its derivation, and made to mean *little* or *insignificant*,—ours are not. If it be very hard work to ascertain the relative gravity or criminality of other men's evil deeds and evil states of mind, we may know a little—but a little—of the length and breadth of our own. *How* do we know them? Not because we have been able, by certain processes, to make out what they are, or to work up our minds to some tremendous sense of their hideousness, but because God has not allowed us—much as we have wished it—to remain ignorant of them, because He has not suffered us to quench His light when we have laboured hardest to draw it down into our darkness. If we have any impression about our evil at all, thus, and thus only, have we

received the impression. But again; *what* have we learnt about those evils of ours? Surely we have learnt this—that they come from want of communion with the true and righteous and holy mind of Him in Whom we are living and moving and having our being; that they come from want of communion with the human creatures among whom we are dwelling. We are continually tempted to trace them to some other causes than this; to think that they consist in something else than in the habit of self-pleasing, self-willing, self-seeking; that they issue in something else than a deeper alienation from God and from our fellows. But to this mode of contemplating them we are constantly recalled, first by our ministerial duties themselves, which remind us that we are meant to show forth God's light to men, and to present the sorrows and sins of men before God; secondly, by this Sacrament, which it is our highest function to administer,—which reminds us by its entire substance, and by all the parts of it, that the mind of God is satisfied only with an entire, voluntary, filial sacrifice, and that this sacrifice is the bond of peace for all, is the deliverance from the sins of the world.

VI. Having this self-knowledge as his starting-point,—having learnt that his self-knowledge becomes a contradiction and a lie unless it begins and terminates in the knowledge of God,—the minister may perhaps meet those who come to lay their griefs

before him, with a learning and discretion which are not his own. The sin-sick man, the Church tells him, is to be quieted by being led to a full confidence in God's mercy; he is to have the benefit of the absolution and godly counsel which he needs; he is to be prepared for coming with a clean heart to the Communion. These are not inconsistent commands to one whose own experience has interpreted them, and who believes that the highest power with which God can endow any human being, is the power of leading his fellow-creatures out of the confusions and malignity of self, into the clear and full revelation of Him Who is perfect Truth and Clearness and Loving-kindness. To quiet the conscience by the exhibition of His mercy, is not to give a man any, the slightest, hope of indulgence for his sin; it is to show him the way out of his sin, whatever it is. It requires therefore no minute sifting of the quality and amount of a past transgression, to know whether or on what conditions it may be forgiven. *Nothing* is forgiven to the man while he remains shut up in himself; there will be an ever increasing and never terminating consciousness of the past evil, an ever increasing and more interminable consciousness of its perpetuity, as a part of him. There is *all* forgiveness to the man who accepts the deliverance from self as from a chain which he has forged; who enters into the state of fellowship with God and Man, which is the state which Christ has won for him.

Here is the absolution which a man may give to his fellow, because God has given it to all; an absolution which the conscience is able to recognize as just what it needs, because it is the emancipation from the very load by which it is crushed, and from which it seemed as if there could be no emancipation. Here is not a substitution for the Communion, but a preparation for it, seeing that what the Service tells him is, that there is a new and living way consecrated for him out of his darkness, into the presence of the perfect Light; and seeing that in the Sacrament he is invited to cast off the weight of his evil nature, and to put on Him Whose cross declared Him to be the Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, for us all. He does carry a burden with him to the altar. As a separate creature he will bear it always. What the priest has told him before is, that he is a member of Christ, and may cast it upon Him. What he is told now is, that it has been borne for him and for the whole world, and that he may rise up a new man, capable of denying himself, capable of serving God and serving his fellows, in the strength of Christ's Spirit. The priest has not assumed the office of Christ, but has led him to Christ.

VII. If this be so, we may cheerfully admit that the Christian Priest may do for a sinner and sufferer what a mere kind friend, who receives his confidence, cannot do equally well. For by his office he testifies of the Universal Sacrifice, of the Universal Fellow-

ship. By his office, therefore, he declares his own personal inefficiency, he directs the individual man to the One Centre, the One Deliverer, the One Mediator. By his office he warns each man that to seek his life anywhere but in the common Lord and Head of Mankind, is to lose it. By his office he declares that they who are ready to die with Christ shall rise with Him.

What motive has one who is privileged to bestow such an absolution as this, to weigh the amount of wrong in this act or person or that,—to weigh them, though he knows that the scales must be uneven and false? *He* must say to the person who volunteers a confession of any particular offence, "If it is a com-"fort to you to tell it me, I am willing to hear. If "it involves offence to a neighbour, I shall bid you "go and make restitution to him before you come to "the altar, as our Lord says that you must. If it "involves a quarrel with your neighbour, I shall bid "you be reconciled to him before you come to the "altar. But as for prescribing to you any mode of "compensation to GOD, of reconciliation with GOD, I "will not do it, I dare not do it. He has sent me to "say that He has forgiven you for Christ's sake, and "made reconciliation with you. I can only bid you "accept that forgiveness and reconciliation; I can "only hold out to you and to all this pledge and sign "of reconciliation, this pledge and sign that you "may cast away the sinful old man, and be clothed

"with the true humanity of Jesus Christ, for which "you were created. If you wish to revive the evil "thoughts and conditions which belong to that old "man—into which you have fallen, by forsaking your "proper state as a member of Christ, I will give you "no encouragement. Such reminiscences, such con- "fessions, may please the morbid taste of the age; "you may trade in them with the caterers for the "circulating library. But you shall not bring them "to me; you shall not make them a preparation for "the Holy Communion; for except it be the study of "religious controversies and newspapers, there is no "preparation so bad." Let there be ever so much craving then, as some who seem to know say there is, among a portion of the laity, brought up in an artificial and sickly atmosphere, for these confessions, it is to be discountenanced, not pampered, by the priest. It may have other satisfactions; he has no business to satisfy it; for it will grow by what it feeds on, and the next generation will be feebler and more corrupt than ours.

VIII. At the same time I do not think that it is the business of sensible and thoughtful men to encourage the middle classes in a blind fury against Confession, and against everything which they denounce under the name of Priestcraft. All classes in the land, the Aristocratical, the Trading, the Professional, the Working, have sins enough to confess before God. It is better that they should be thinking *what* they

have to confess,—what insincerities and hypocrisies towards God, what falsehoods towards their fellow-men,—than that any one of them should be assuming a commission to establish their standard of faith and practice,—which will certainly be a very low and evil standard,—in the land. The middle classes, and those in the upper who abetted them, did a very great and noble work in the seventeenth century, while they fought against the tyranny of kings and prelates. But when they obtained the mastery, they established a worse priestcraft than that which they subverted. It is well to be on our guard against a result which will be much worse, because much less sincere, in our day. Establish a middle class ascendency,—a middle class religion,—and the destruction of our old ecclesiastical and civil order is the least part of the evil which will ensue. The *people* will be trodden down as they have never been trodden down yet; the faith of the land will be a faith which has no interest for them. The Gospel will not be for them, because it will not be for mankind, and they will be left to Atheism. Therefore it is that the members and ministers of the English Church should strive to understand what she does mean and what she does not mean when she speaks of Confession and Absolution; that they should not abuse her words to a false sense; that they should not forget to obey them in the true sense. I believe that in the false sense they will never have any, even the slightest power over the

body of our people, whatever attraction they may have for a few of its more refined members. I believe that in the true sense, the body of the people will one day assert them as a message of comfort and blessing to them, and will resolve not to be deprived of them.

IX. Still I should have little confidence in the words of any local Church, however dear and venerable, if I did not think that they echoed the words of that Book which is for the whole Church, which contains its principles and its charter. I have reluctantly delayed so long to speak of the text which I have chosen, and which expresses, it seems to me, the whole doctrine of Confession in its divinest form.

It is part of the address which He Who holds the sharp two-edged sword addresses to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos. He speaks; not the Beloved Disciple. He speaks not to the minister or officer of the Church as if he were separate from it, but as the representative of its character, as answerable for its sins. He commends the minister of this Church, and therefore the Church itself, for fidelity to His name under great temptations to forsake it. He blames the minister of this Church, and therefore the Church itself, for corruptions that had crept into it, and that were threatening its life. Doctrines springing from high spiritual pretensions, and leading to gross immorality, had invaded it. Of these, and of all the evils which they had engendered, the Son of Man calls them to repent. He is fighting against them with the

sword out of His mouth. And He promises, to him that overcometh that which is dividing and destroying the Church, "*I will give to him of the hidden manna; and I will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

That the white stone is the verdict of acquittal, the absolution of the heart and conscience, no one has ever doubted. What I wish you to notice is,—(1) that this is the gift of the Son of Man; (2) that it is a gift to a body; (3) that it is connected with that hidden manna, the bread of life, which the Father giveth from Heaven; (4) that this is assured to each man who overcomes an infection to which all the members of the body are liable, by faith and confidence in the Head of the body; (5) that though each man may possess it, he does not hold it in his own old name: *a new Name* is written upon it; (6) that this forgiveness is nevertheless not something of which others can be apprised: "*no man knoweth but he who receiveth it.*" The more all these particulars are meditated upon, the more light I think they will throw upon this most practical, often this most embarrassing, of subjects. So far as we believe Christ to be really in the midst of us, the Source of our union and of our life; so far as we believe that He speaks to us, not as separate beings, but as parts of a Divine Society, bound together by such ties as make each responsible for the acts of the other, affected by the evils of the others; so far as we own that

there is one common food for our spirits, and that that food is not only from Christ, but is the very body and blood which He gave for the life of the world; so far as we are conscious of a power which is continually striving to overcome us, which must be overcome by Christ's power; so far as we understand that all our forgiveness, all our higher and better state, comes to us in His name, and not in our own names; so far as we own absolution to be a gift, for which we are to praise God throughout all ages, but which is yet a hidden gift, not palpable to the senses, not to be boasted of before others, which disappears when we try to reduce it into possession, or to proclaim it to the world, which is an infinite blessing only while we refer it to the infinite God,—so far as we hold these convictions, so far will Confession be changed from the hardest of duties into the most joyful of privileges; so far will Absolution become indeed the setting free of the whole man from an unutterable bondage; so far will our Eucharist be indeed a Communion with Angels and Archangels around the Throne, because a Communion with Him Who sitteth on the Throne and with the Lamb, Who liveth for ever and ever.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

(NOT PREACHED.)

August 1, 1858.

REVELATION III. 20.

"BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK: IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME."

I TOOK the text of my last sermon from a passage in one of those messages to the Church with which the Apocalypse opens. This sentence is from another of those messages.

Taken literally, it at once recalls to us that Lord's Supper of which I have been speaking to you so much. Do we need to get rid of the letter, or to explain it away, that we may discover the spiritual signification of it? Surely not; unless you are determined that the Lord's Supper shall *not* have a spiritual meaning, that that shall be a mere dry form. If you think that it speaks to us of a Presence into which only the spirit of a man is able to enter, of a Presence which is near to us, though we may refuse

to own it, then it speaks as the text speaks; then one is the faithful interpreter of the other.

But the promise, I shall be reminded, was addressed to a particular Church, and that a Church of the primitive, the Apostolic, age. It certainly was; we ought never to forget it. And let us not forget *what* the particular Church was,—what notices we have of its character. Let me read to you the previous part of the message: "*Unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*"

I. (1) Many of us would gladly accept this portrait as a full-length one of an Asiatic *city*, which had received the Greek civilization and been brought under the Roman rule. How exactly, we should have said,

the exhausted, heartless, hopeless, and yet self-conceited temper of such a Society is exhibited here! How well the description applies to the period of the twelve Cæsars! But that these same qualities should be attributed to the *Church* which was set up in this city as a witness for what is highest and divinest, would cause us great scandal, if the charge came from some Pagan of that time, or some infidel of later times. We should resolutely maintain that the baptized body was the great exception to the general decay and corruption; that precisely the reverse of what was seen elsewhere was to be found there. "It may not be so now," we should say; "for now the Church is mingled with the world, debased by State patronage, subject to no trials. But it was so in those days: only the blindness of unbelief could refuse to confess the fact. At all events," we should continue, "the *minister* of the Church will have been an example to the Jews and heathens around him of the difference between those who received the Gospel and them." All such *à priori* conclusions may possibly maintain their ground against the evidence—even what in other cases would be the strong evidence—of fallible men; they cannot stand for a moment against the testimony of St. John, and of One higher than St. John. We are bound to believe that—not a Greek, or Asiatic, or Romanized Society, but a Christian Society living under the eye of St. John; —not that Society apart from its angel or minister,

but considered as a body represented by its angel or minister—answered to this report: "*Thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold.*"

(2) I do not think that any additional words can make that description more vivid than it is, or can make us understand better the condition of those upon whom it was bestowed. They have no *heat*, no fervour, in any great cause, in pursuit of any great object; none of that earnestness which leads men

"To scorn delights, and live laborious days,"

to forget themselves, to throw themselves away. They are not *cold;* they still maintain the doctrines, as against other men, which have ceased to exercise any dominion over *them*, to inspire *them* with any courage and devotion. There is even a pleasant sensation of something approaching to warmth produced by the exertion to prove that those who differ with them are wrong; they can almost persuade themselves that they believe, whilst they convict other men of disbelieving.

(3) Better, says the message, any state than this; better the most rash, ill-judging vehemence in support of a conviction; better the coldness which causes acute pain. Calm energy may succeed to the first excess; those who are suffering from the second may send up a cry for a live coal to touch them and kindle them. "*I would,*" says the Lord of Man, "*thou wert cold or hot.* I, Who try the hearts and reins, know either of those states to be less deadly than

this intermediate one. If this continues,—if it settles down into a permanent habit,—the Church must cease to be Mine, it must be left to itself. *I will spue thee out of my mouth.*"

(4) But near as the dissolution of a Society is, which has contracted this temper, there is no consciousness or apprehension of it. The Laodiceans "*were rich and increased in goods, and thought they had need of nothing.*" Wherever you find that lukewarmness which is denounced in the former verse, there I believe you will find the contentment and self-glorification which we are told of here. A Society which has discovered an exact and reasonable balance between excesses, which is able to say of itself, "We are not too "zealous, like such and such foolish people; we are "not inclined to infidelity, like *those* unhappy people. "Thank God! we have hit the mean between enthu-"siasm and frigidity,"—such a Society is certainly wrapped up in vanity and Phariseeism; whether it fasts and gives tithes, or feasts and withholds tithes, it prays as the man prayed who exalted himself in the Temple, and did *not* go down to his house justified.

(5) For such a Society to discern that it is "*poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked*" must be exceedingly difficult. And yet He Who spoke to the Church of Laodicea declares that this knowledge is necessary for its very existence. And why? Because this Society utters a lie in every one of its confessions,—*is* itself a lie, and the most terrible and blasphemous of

all lies,—if all its riches and illumination and virtues are not in Christ, if it has anything whatever which it can claim as its own. This is the elementary truth which was involved in its baptism, which its members learnt when they were preparing for baptism. If it has been lost, every step of the way must be trodden again till it is recovered. If the Church of the Laodiceans fancied that what was acknowledged in the first hour of its establishment need not be acknowledged still; if any member of that Church fancied that though he was only poor and blind and naked in himself before his conversion, he had acquired some wealth and light and covering of his own since,—the sooner the delusion was torn from the eyes of both, even by humiliations the most terrible, the safer in the end it would be for them.

(6) And there is One Who declares that He has methods of discipline and correction which He is using for this very end. He cares for those whose lukewarmness is hurrying on their ruin. He cares for those who regard the symptoms of disease as signs of health, as reasons for confidence. Because He cares for them, He will not cease to punish them till He has brought them to loathe that which they are cherishing and boasting of; till He has made them earnest in self-renunciation, earnest in turning to Him. "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*"

II. (1) I have gone over the different parts of this

exhortation, chiefly that I may show you how little there was in the state of this early community which could entitle it to any rare or special blessing. Consider, if you please, that this Laodicean Church was in a worse state than our own; regard its faults as of an entirely different kind from any which can be imputed to us,—*these* will not be reasons for saying that we may not claim the promise which our Lord makes to them. But I should be dishonest if I did not own that I discern a remarkable likeness between the condition of certain Churches in this day, and the one which we have been speaking of,—nay, if I allowed any ambiguity to rest on the word *certain* Churches; if I did not at once declare that among them I allude particularly to that one which I know best and love best. That quality of being neither hot nor cold,—of being not much in earnest for any principle, yet of preserving a decent respect for principles; that habit of congratulating ourselves on this temperance, as if it were a high virtue, prolific of fruits which could never grow in the torrid or in the frigid zone of bygone ages,—I cannot but regard as distinctive marks of our period and our country. We feel that they are so from what passes in ourselves. Each one of us finds it exceedingly hard to vanquish this lukewarmness in himself, to set any object before him, and pursue it as if it were a case of life and death; each one of us finds himself tempted to think that he is wiser, more clear-sighted,

less in danger of being hurried into extremes, less a victim of delusions, than the men whom he reads of, and on whom he bestows a patronizing admiration. We can talk of the heroic times now and then, and wish ourselves in them. But if we render an honest account to ourselves of our own meaning, we shall find that we think those heroes were toiling, amongst much confusion, to make us what we are; we shall find that our compliments to their simple faith are accompanied with much secret self-congratulation that we are far beyond the stage at which such a faith was possible; we shall discern that at least one-half of all our praises of their energy are meant to explain why we may be, must be, ought to be, listless. The *laudator temporis acti* often exhibits the very same disposition, which comes forth more coarsely, more simply, in the man who is boasting all day long of our enlightenment and progress.

And how dare we pretend to draw distinctions between the *people* of England and the *Church* of England,—to say that no doubt the Laodicean vices are to be traced in the one, but that the other is exempt from them? No such distinction, we see, was possible in the first age, though then the Church appeared to stand out in direct contrast to the surrounding world. The Church, contemplated merely as a collection of men stamped with a certain name, professing certain opinions, *could* not exhibit any such contrast. Of necessity it embodied all the tendencies of those by

whom it was surrounded. Nay more; the Church exhibited the evil which affected the heathen people in its root and principle; Churchmen presented that evil in a more complete form; what was dispersed in others was concentrated in them. Do not let us hide this truth from ourselves. By the very law of the Church's existence it must be so. The horrors of ecclesiastical history are utterly inexplicable if we refuse to recognize the relation in which the Church stands to mankind; they are more appalling, but they are quite intelligible, in the light of it. I desire that we should bring the conviction home to our hearts; that we should test it less by the records of past times than by what we are doing and thinking;—still more, by what we are *not* doing and *not* thinking.

There is indeed in society at large a want of heat or cold—of courage to confess, of courage to deny,—a skill in perceiving every difficulty which may be an excuse for not acting, an uncertainty whether there is any end which is worth the trouble of seeking it, whether those who make ventures for the sake of Truth will ever get back an adequate reward. But whence comes this habit of mind? From the half-belief of *us* who pretend to be the champions of belief; from the nervous anxiety which *we* show lest the doctrines which we declare to have proceeded from God should be shaken by the wit or ingenuity of men; from the proofs *we* give that we are calculating accurately the advantages of obeying God, and so are

making His service the service of self. Here is the worldly temper, not only infecting our religion, but nourished by it,—growing strong and stronger from its influence.

Nor is the same remark less true of that other Laodicean symptom which was so closely connected with this. Have we the right to accuse any irreligious men of boasting that they are rich and increased with goods? Who are such boasters as we? When we talk of *our* Church—a convenient synonym for ourselves—how ready we are with the phrases, "What a delightful medium we have found between the tinsel and worldliness of Rome and the rigidness and nakedness of Geneva. No outrageous extremes, no vehemence—all mildness, equity, propriety. We honour the wealthy, we are very good to the poor. What have we need of?"

There are some who do not adopt this language. The Church established in the land is for them a mere outward Church, possessing certain privileges, but altogether distinct from the body of true believers. A very natural opinion! But does it save those who adopt it from saying that they, the believers—they, the true Church—are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing? Does not this temptation lie fearfully near them when they are marking the boundaries between them and the world? Are they not copying the worst characteristics of the world, its pride and exclusiveness, in the very act of severing them-

selves from it? But perhaps we are aware of these dangers,—we have lived through them and escaped them. "*We* are not anxious to divide ourselves from Rome; we long for fellowship with it, that we may repulse those vile men who are content with the name of Protestants. Or *we* are not anxious to sever ourselves from our brethren in foreign Churches or among the Dissenters at home; we want their aid against the wretches who would bring us into communion with Rome." Hopeful experiments both! But are those who engage in them not "*rich and increased in goods*," very wise, very superior to their neighbours, needing nothing but that their own schemes may be realized?

(2) My brethren, I feel the danger of speaking thus of different classes of my fellow-Churchmen. I feel keenly how, in the act of referring to them, I am liable to commit the very faults which I am imputing to them; to think myself better than they are, possessed of some riches and wisdom which they have not. Why am I entering upon this subject at all, except that I may tell you so; that I may confess to you how hard and perilous I feel the task of warning and exhorting to be; how often I am ready to shrink from it in shame and confusion, knowing that in condemning others I am condemning myself,—that I can find no fault in them, which they might not detect in an aggravated form in me, if I have not detected it in myself? I admit at once that this is the fearful position of those whose office calls them

to be reprovers; often they must feel as if it were a sin to open their lips, often as if it were a sin to be silent; often they will suspect that it signifies little, as far as other men are concerned, which course they take, since their words are mere sounds which mingle with the rest whereof the air is full, but scarcely produce the slightest flutter in any human spirit. But out of this uncertainty and despondency good proceeds. The minister who thought himself to be somebody, finds that he is nobody. His imaginary goods and riches disappear. He knows that he is poor and blind, and he knows Who has shown him that he is; One Who can make His reproofs and chastenings felt; One Who rebukes and chastens, not because He hates, but because He loves. And so the minister is able in some measure to understand the text; is able in some measure to present it to his congregation, as being written as well for every one of them as for him.

(3) "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock.*" I know that many persons say, "This is figurative language. We find it hard enough to acknowledge the *history* of the Bible. If we consent with some reluctance to accept that, must we also attach some special meaning to its metaphors?" I know that divines say, "This is spiritual language. Only spiritual persons can understand it. What we have to set before ordinary, worldly men are the plain declarations of Scripture. If they reject or only half confess the literal passages, how idle to discourse to them of these mysteries!"

My brethren, I never expect any man to believe the history of the Bible—to believe it, I mean, except as a tradition which he accepts from his fathers, and which he fears to reject—till he listens to these words. I am satisfied that in no day would the faith in the history without this, have been worth anything to man or in the sight of God; I am satisfied that without this, in *our* day, no doubter will be brought by the most pompous array of evidences, even so far as to an intellectual reception of the narratives in the Gospels, to say nothing of the articles of the Creed. Nor dare I grieve that God has so ordered it. For I cannot help finding the secret of our lukewarmness, and of our self-conceit, in the attempt which men are making to divide what He has joined together—the testimony of the Conscience, from the facts of the History; the voice of Christ at the door of the heart, from the voice of Christ in His acts upon earth, or in the Book which records these acts. If one of these voices is treated as figurative, so will the other be; if one of these voices is supposed to be only for a select class, so will the other be. And that select class will suffer even more than those whom they have cut off. They will substitute dead phrases for a living Christ; language which signified everything to their fathers will soon signify nothing to them. I hold therefore that we ought to declare constantly, with all the energy which is given us, that we *know* we are not using a figure of rhetoric when we repeat this text, but are

announcing a fact which concerns us, and concerns every man; that when we speak of the conscience in a man, we mean that which God has created to hear this voice, and to answer it, and not any abstraction about which philosophers or divines may think it wise to debate.

If, in making this proclamation, we exalt valleys and level hills,—if those who are called unbelievers discover that Christ is speaking to them, and calling on them to repent, and those who are called believers discover that He is speaking to them, and calling on them to repent,—that is just the office of John the Baptist when he came to witness of the Christ, and it should be ours. If in making this proclamation we appear to assume that a communion between God and Man is not merely the rare privilege of a few, but is the foundation on which the very existence of our race stands; that without it there would have been no thought, memory, hope, no feeling of kinsmanship, no possibility of friendship or affection,—we are only reaffirming the doctrine of the Bible, as well as confirming the anticipation of all nations; we are cutting down human pride, that the Lord alone may be exalted.

(4) Because the text asserts this great and comfortable truth, does it deny that men are excluding themselves, as far as they can, from this communion, are wishing to get rid of it altogether? No! else what would be the force of the invitation to *open the*

door? Surely that implies a power in man to close his mind, to stop his ears. Such a terrible power all Scripture, all experience, compels us to recognize. Only be it always understood that it is a power to deny our proper rights, our true humanity; to *make a lie.*

The sensualist who blocks up his heart with all contemptible objects and vile imaginations,—the proud religionist, like those that persecuted St. Stephen and St. Paul, who blocks up his heart with pride in his own righteousness and contempt of others,—was created, was redeemed, that he might have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Christ is telling him so whilst he rejects it.

(5) Is it not then true that this communion—if in some sense it is the primary necessity of man, that which is implied in all he does, that which it costs him an effort to repel—is also the final reward of man, the perfect good, that which the purest and best have appeared not to have but to hope for? The words "*I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me,*" fully sustain this doctrine. We know that they must mean the fullest intercourse which it is possible for a man to hold with Him Whom all the Host of Heaven worship. That we may feel it to be so, the language is of the simplest, earthliest kind, such as peasants can apprehend. The awfulness is increased by the familiarity. At the close of the divine Book, when we are reaching the last and highest revelation,

all is still common and human. Less than ever is there a separation between the little and the great, the humble and the sublime, the Cross and the Throne. The verse carries us back to that Supper where Jesus sat with His disciples, and with the one who betrayed Him, the night before He suffered. It carries us on to the time when all shall be accomplished in the Kingdom of God. The Apostles sat at that Passover the representatives of their nation, giving thanks for its deliverance. They sat there as the representatives of Mankind, to whom they were to bear witness of the true Lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world. These words tell every man that it is only the self-seeking Judas spirit which can cut him off from this great human promise;—when once he gives up the dream that he is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, it contains the pledge and assurance that he is the inheritor of all things.

Therefore, brethren, seeing that the Lord's Supper is the renewal of this warning, this promise, and this hope, from generation to generation; seeing that it says to each one, "The Judge is at the door;" and says also, "If thou wilt open the door, that Judge is willing to claim thee as His friend, to remove from thee whatever separates thee from Him and from His Father, and from the whole universe;" seeing that it is the witness against all the vices which have destroyed Churches and nations, and turned them from witnesses

for God into His greatest enemies; seeing it shows us how those vices may be eradicated, and we may become socially and individually all that we are intended to be,—I hold that it is a better remedy for the lukewarmness and the conceit of our time, than all schemes which man's art can devise. We may try by sudden and desperate efforts to revive religion amongst us. But who are to be the revivers? Do not we, who should call others to repent, need repentance ourselves? Do not we, who would impart our faith to others, require that that faith should be sifted, that it may be seen how much of it is from above, how much of the earth, how much of the devil? We want One to rouse us out of death, in Whom dwells the Spirit of calm, eternal life,—One Who does not wait for our vehement solicitation, but Who is ever standing at the door of our hearts and knocking,—One Who does not raise a few above the rest, but One Who humbles all that He may exalt all,—One Who does not terrify us into a self-seeking religion, but tells us that we shall have fellowship with Him; that if we overcome we shall "*sit with Him on His throne, as He has overcome and has set down with His Father on His throne.*"

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

October 24, 1858.

JOHN VIII. 12.

"THEN SPAKE JESUS UNTO THEM AGAIN, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS."

WE begin this afternoon to read the Book of Proverbs. A portion of that book consists of aphorisms relating to the well-being of individuals and nations; on Morals and Politics, as we might say in modern phraseology. The ground of these aphorisms lies in the earlier chapters. Before we are taught how Wisdom and Folly are exhibited in the transactions of life, we are told what Wisdom and Folly are. A collection of shrewd observations by a man who has some experience of the world and of himself is always worthy of study. But if it is not put together merely or chiefly for the purpose of displaying the writer's sagacity, we have a right to ask that he will show us how we may turn his discoveries to account in any emergencies of ours. Solomon does not decline this challenge. His claim to be a wise man or a wise king rests not the least on his isolation from his fellow-men, upon his want of sympathy with them. He

is wiser than others because he enters more than others into that which is human and universal, because he is freer from affectation and singularities, because he looks more earnestly and bravely into the heart of commonplaces, because he can tell his readers what is true—and what they can ascertain to be true —of themselves as much as him. He lets his silly headstrong son know that there is a light near him in which he may walk, and a darkness in which he may walk also. Rehoboam was not in this respect different from Solomon. There was the same law for both, the same unseen Wisdom ever revealing itself to the search and love of both, the same harlot sense tempting them away from this Wisdom to follow their own courses, to choose their own delusions, to slay themselves. Each had that in him which made this tempter very powerful, very attractive; each was addressed by the Divine Teacher, the true Lawgiver and King of Man; each could heed that voice, and find, though it was soft and gentle, that it had a might to command which dwelt in no other. Wisdom, so Solomon affirms, is no hard, dreary abstraction, no result of experience, no product of our understanding. It is living, actual, personal; we find it, not make it; we are to search for it, and it will surely disclose itself; the more we confess it, the more conscious we become of its presence; the more our understandings do it homage, not trusting in themselves, the more free, vigorous, manly they are.

I. Such is the doctrine of the Book,—a doctrine which craves to be tried by its application to all the greatest and pettiest details of our existence, which sets itself up to pronounce judgment upon the acts and policy of kings, and does not disdain the weights and measures of the shop,—which requires no happy accidents of time or place that it may be verified,—which is just as willing to be proved by the inconsistencies, follies, sins, of those who proclaim it, as by their most heroical deeds. With that which would be called, in any work of art, subtle and bitter irony,—and it is the subtlest and bitterest of all irony, for it is the irony of fact,—Solomon himself is set forth to us in the Scriptures as the signal type and illustration of his own warnings. The wise king becomes elated with his own wisdom; he is charmed and intoxicated by the visible things which had poured themselves at his feet as their master; he is overpowered by the images which he had taught others to beware of and to turn from; he is turned into a fool, and by his folly establishes his principle for all who will meditate the story, not in scorn or despair, but in charity and self-suspicion, trying to learn from it where their safety lies.

II. If we cannot separate this Book of Proverbs from the life of him who wrote it, neither can we separate it from the different stages of the history of the people for whom it was written. There cannot be a greater mistake than to look upon it as a singu-

lar document, a specimen of Jewish philosophy, and not to perceive how it is connected with all that has been recorded in simple narrative of Abraham and the patriarchs, with all that was written of fixed law in tables, with all the visions and raptures of holy seers. The end of the Jewish Calling and Covenant, the meaning of Circumcision (if we may take the language of the Bible in its plain sense), was to set apart one race to the Living and True and Unseen God, to detach them from visible idolatries, and so to make them a wise and understanding people in the sight of the sense-bound nations around.

If this was not the end of their family order and their legal government,—if God Himself was not the author of both,—if He was not upholding both,—if their well-being did not stand in trust in Him, as a present Protector and King, as One who would be the Protector and King of their children after them, —if all their institutions were not instruments for redeeming them from the service of idols they made for themselves, that they might serve Him Who had made them in His image—the story is a fiction from beginning to end. You cannot reconstruct it on the supposition that those who were concerned in it were honest, well-intentioned, at worst self-deceived men; we are bound to treat them as wilful impostors, blasphemers, liars. But if the quiet pastoral life described in the Book of Genesis has this character stamped upon it no less legibly than the laws and statutes in

the Wilderness,—if the voice, "*Get thee out of thy father's house into a land that I will shew thee,*" and "*In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,*" carried this signification, as well as the I AM which came out of the bush that was burning and not consumed,—then, just as the Book of Psalms translates this historical language into the language of prayer and praise, the Book of Proverbs translates it with equal accuracy into the language of moral discourse. The devotions, like the maxims of conduct, presume a perpetual conflict between Life and Death, Light and Darkness; presume that every man and every nation is engaged in that conflict. Both alike treat this fight as an actual and not a sham fight, because the Light does not come from man but to man; because it comes not to his eyes but to his own self, to his conscience and heart; because He from Whom it proceeds is a Being Who may be trusted, Who desires the deliverance of His creatures out of the hands of their enemies, Who means to effect their deliverance. And this faith could be sustained in the conscience of the nation, it could raise and purify the conscience of the individual members of the nation; because there was a continual witness, borne by holy men, borne by the national blessings and national judgments which they interpreted, that the Divine Wisdom, the Word that was with God, "*as one brought up with Him, and whose delights were with the Sons of Men,*" would one day come forth, not as a cold abstraction, not in the

letters of a book, but living and personal, even such a one as Solomon had declared to be the source of all right thoughts and good counsels, the true King of Men, the object of all loyal homage and dutiful love.

III. It was proved clearly in that interval which elapsed between the termination of independent Jewish history and the coming of our Lord, that the sense of a conflict between light and darkness had been working in all the Pagan nations. The cultivated people who become known to us during that time differ from other people precisely because they are more conscious of it. They despise those whom they call barbarians, however physically strong, because they appear to them to want this perception. Yet they do in fact, by their clearer utterances, interpret the confused dreams of these barbarians, and show that the battle was one in which they also were engaged. Every tradition respecting any heroic man witnesses that he was great because, being a son of some God, he had made the decision, however imperfectly he might adhere to it, between the claims of sense and of an invisible guide. The after-speculations of philosophers were but working out these materials, trying to ascertain how it was possible for men to behave themselves between two such influences, which they were to obey, and whence each proceeded. So far from desiring to hide these facts, he who really believes in the Jewish calling and revelation will loudly proclaim them. They prove

wonderfully that it was a calling for the good of man, a revelation of that Wisdom which is speaking to man. They corroborate the truth which Solomon illustrated under so many aspects. They are testimonies from the innermost consciences and hearts of humanity that there was a Guide near all, Who could not by searching be found out, though He might in their words and acts be acknowledged. They are a cry from that same heart and conscience that He would declare Himself to them; would show what he had to do with God and with Man; and so what God and Man were each to the other.

IV. "*Then spake Jesus unto them again, I am the Light of the World.*" He had often spoke this word before. Every act of mercy He did, spoke it to the men who were the subjects of it. St. John dwells specially upon His cure of *blindness*. He takes that as an instance—the clearest and liveliest instance—of the effects which were produced by all His miracles. Each sufferer felt that a power of darkness had taken hold of him; that a portion of the beauty and joy of the Universe was hidden from him. The appearance of a Deliverer who could set him free from his plague was the appearance of a Light. He was brought out of a cave; the air that breathed upon the rest of men was breathing on him; the common sun was shining on him. So the leper felt, who had heard Christ speaking on the Mount, and dared to approach Him, exile though he was from

the rest of his kind. "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Thou canst bring me back into the society of human beings; thou canst take away this veil which divides me from them." So it was with the palsied man, to whom He delivered that more astonishing message, "*Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*" A palsy there was on his heart more hopeless apparently than the palsy on his limbs. There was One Who saw down into the depth of his heart, Who scattered the darkness there. He became a freed man, an illuminated man. He could rise and walk. Christ's word was light; the entrance of it into the soul gave light, and that light diffused itself through every part of the man. It brought health and vigour wherever it encountered sickness and decay.

Whether the Evangelists tell of the words by which He scattered diseases, or the words by which He taught the people, their mode of speaking is the same; they could find none so simple and true. He goes into the land of Zabulon and Naphthali, into Galilee of the Gentiles. It is a half-idolatrous region; it was therefore described—Isaiah had so described it centuries before—as a region of darkness and the shadow of death. Our Lord's appearance in it is the appearance of a Light, not to one here and there, but to the whole of that outcast population. There is no real difference in these cases. The gracious light which shines on the sorrowing or tormented man is the Universal Light; his bless-

ing is that he is brought in a measure to be a sharer of it. That Light is only fulfilling its proper function, when its presence is felt at once by whole multitudes.

Divines are wont to make distinctions between Christ the Teacher of the world at large, and Christ the Teacher of the heart and conscience of each man. They talk of an outward Christ and an inward Christ. The Evangelists indulge in no such refinements. The Christ Who was born of the Virgin, Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, reveals Himself, not to the eyes of those who actually see and handle Him, but to a spirit within them. He calls forth faith, which is the proper organ and exercise of that spirit; He speaks to a man that was hidden within the man. And there is *always* an answer of some kind to His voice. It may come forth in a stupid yawn, as of one half-awakened and longing to sleep again. It may come forth in a growl of defiance, "What have we to do with Thee?" But in one case or another there is a recognition of the Holy One; there is a sense of Light, however painful it may be, however little the eye may be disposed to entertain it.

V. And so there is no need of artificial rules and distinctions, such as doctors invent for their own confusion. The Light makes the distinction. It is not the distinction of Pharisee or Publican, of religious men or irreligious. It goes deeper than that. It is

the distinction between that in every man which welcomes the light and claims kindred with it, and that in every man which eschews the light and would fain extinguish it for ever. It expresses itself in these words: "*He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.*"

When the Son of Man said to Matthew the Publican, as he sat at the receipt of custom, "*Follow Me,*" there was no force exerted upon him more than upon any Scribe or Ruler who cried, "*This man blasphemeth; he casteth out devils through the Prince of the Devils.*" It was altogether an inward attraction. Matthew was in want of a guide out of the covetousness and money-worship to which he felt that all his circumstances, and something stronger than circumstances, made him prone. His guide had come, had spoken to him, had uttered the command which He had the right and power to utter. So he became a disciple. Through what paths he was to be led he knew not; what work he was to do besides that of collecting taxes he knew not. The Master would show him in due time. His business was to follow. As he followed the Light, it showed more and more of the confusion in which he had been walking, more and more of his own ignorance and folly. As he followed it, the path of life seemed often a thornier, a more tangled path than it had been before, just because thorns which before pierced him and went into him were now visible; just because he had a goal in sight,

and was not merely wandering wherever chance led him. Strangest of all! he found that to follow the King of Men was to follow a Sufferer; that *His* path was a path of humiliation, of contempt, of death; that a Cross was at the end of it. What an end! This, said our Lord, is the hour of the powers of darkness. They had to all appearance triumphed. The Deliverer was crushed. The Light of the World was put out.

And yet it was then that Matthew the publican found what he had to do besides collecting the taxes. What was it? To testify, "The Light of the World is not put out. It never was shining so brightly as now. That Cross is the fullest and most perfect exhibition of it, to men, to Angels, to you, and to me. Now is that Being manifested in Whom is Light and no darkness at all; Good, and not one taint of evil. Now is that Being seen in a dying Man. Now is His reconciliation with our race complete. Now have Death and the Grave been converted into the great testimonies for Life and Immortality. Now may each man who has the sentence of Adam upon him, know that he is a kinsman of the Son of God. Now may he follow Him, and so, when the darkness is thickest around him and within, not walk in it, but see the Light of Life."

And so the doctrine of the Book of Proverbs—the doctrine to which the heroes of the old world clung, though it came to them through no written book—

has been changed into the message of the Gospel. The conscience of mankind has cried in various tongues, or in mere inarticulate groans, for the Light. And the Light has come forth to it. And the Light of the Word is saying now to every one of us, "*Follow me, and thou shalt not walk in darkness.*" Yes, brethren, to every one of us, in his commonest works, at the receipt of custom, in the hall of justice, in our daily intercourse with each other, as citizens, as fathers, brothers, husbands. There is a road into which every man is tempted, in whatever work he is engaged; a road that looks promising; a road that may lead —that does sometimes lead—to wealth and fame. But it is a road which is certain to end in darkness; which in truth is dark all along. A little tampering with conscience, words spoken and things done that will not bear the light—that we cannot quite dare to look at ourselves,—whither are these leading? To the loss of all moral discernment; to the incapacity of knowing right from wrong, truth from falsehood; to that habit of falsehood, that state of falsehood, which is Hell.

And yet to avoid these,—to keep the heart or reason open and free and pure, able to hold the truth it has, ready to receive that which it has not,—how hard is this! Which of us does not bitterly know how hard? Yes! and how desperate the effort, if our own understandings and our own consciences were left to find the light which they want,

or if they must depend on the opinion of society, on the traditions of men to give it them. But it is not so. Jesus the Son of Man speaks now as ever, "*I* am the Light of the World, shining on all, not far from any. In all perplexities, bewilderments, temptations, trust in Me. I will guide you, and following Me ye shall not walk in darkness."

And for us too, as for our Leader, "*Via Crucis, Via Lucis.*" He will use crosses on earth as means of purging our eyes, and preparing them for the Light which will burst upon the whole world when He appears.

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

October 31, 1858.

PROVERBS XVI. 6.

"BY MERCY AND TRUTH INIQUITY IS PURGED, AND BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD MEN DEPART FROM EVIL."

How many opposing theories, in jurisprudence, education, theology, are suggested by these few words! "If you would reform criminals, you must use mercy; all other methods have been tried and failed;" this is one doctrine with which, in this day, we must be all tolerably familiar. Those who consider that it furnishes an all-sufficient rule for the treatment of convicted wrong-doers, generally extend it also to the discipline of children; severity with them is held to aggravate the evil which it seeks to cure. The habit of mind which leads to these two conclusions arrives, without any logical effort, at a third,—that the *Divine* character should be presented to men as one of pure unmixed mercy; so only, they say, can the hard heart of a sinner be melted; so only can *his iniquity be purged.*

The opposite temper is scarcely less common, either

as a reaction against this, or as that which has provoked it. "Make criminals, make children feel that there is a stern law, which must execute itself, which does not change its nature or lose its power because they are pleased to trifle with it. That method certainly may bring the actual offender to reason,—is the only one at all likely to deter others from imitating him; it uses the young to regard transgression as something involving detection and shame; it forms strong, not, like the other system, soft and puny men." Those who give these attributes the highest throne on earth can only contemplate in the Majesty of the Heavens a form of fixed eternal Justice and Right. The sense of these, they think, purges iniquity, if anything can.

As we think of the first clause in the text, so shall we think of the second. "The Fear of the Lord," say one class, "was inculcated by the Old Dispensation; the Love of Him is the principle of the New. Men may depart from evil under the influence of fear, but they speedily return to it again. Let them heartily delight in Him who forbids evil, and they will renounce it for ever."—"Vain expectation, belied by all experience!" exclaim the teachers of the opposite school; "what becomes of mere feeling, affection, gratitude, sympathy, when a strong motive is presented to the heart,—when it is supported by subtle arguments to the understanding? That which you trust gives way, often leagues itself with the assailant.

The hope of forgiveness which you have been so careful to encourage is a continual temptation to make the venture. The tender sensitive spirit your gentle treatment has created is the most prone to all dangerous attractions. Fortify it with Fear, let it tremble to do wrong, or you will find that you have not kept it from falling; awaken its fears when it has fallen, or it will never depart from evil."

These arguments are practically very perplexing; the most practical people have a witness in themselves or in their experience that the decisions of neither school can be implicitly followed. But their efforts to follow both a certain way, or to discover a compromise between them, are not in general very successful. A criminal jurisprudence which is partly severe, partly lenient, misses the security of rules and the grace of gentleness. The mischiefs of that education which today is rigid, tomorrow relaxed, are proverbial. All wise persons tell us that unvarying cruelty, or the most resolute indulgence, is less utterly destructive of body and soul. And I dare not conceal my conviction, brethren, that the theology which answers to these experiments, and furnishes the secret or acknowledged justification of them, is in its effects and in its principle even more terrible. The notion, so often put forward in popular as well as scholastic writings, of a conflict in the Divine Mind between the attributes of Justice and Mercy, and of a scheme by which they are brought into reconciliation, would have been too re-

volting, I am sure, for the consciences of good and wise men, if they had recollected Who it was of Whom they were daring to speak. In the awfulness of prayer or thanksgiving, they could not have borne such a conception of the Being Whose name is holy, Whose nature is one. But earthly rhetoric or technical phraseology can raise a thick veil between the heart and its object. While we are occupied with these there may be no sense of our standing in a Divine presence; we may utter words concerning Him Who inhabiteth eternity, which we should resent as mean and unworthy if they were applied to a fellow-creature for whom we cared. By a Mercy and Truth thus torn apart and set in opposition to each other, we may say boldly, iniquity is *not* purged; by that fear which such a representation of God begets, men will not depart from evil.

Solomon was speaking in the spirit of the Old Testament; yet you perceive in his words no sense of a contradiction between these two qualities, no endeavour to show how they may be adjusted to each other. He assumes that they must work together, that one cannot exist without the other. He does not say that Truth is to be tempered with Mercy, or that Mercy must not be carried too far lest it should interfere with Truth; or that Mercy pleads for the guilty man whom Truth condemns, or that Truth demands a compensation for its concessions to Mercy. He says simply, "*By Mercy and Truth iniquity is purged;*"

both are equally enemies of iniquity; both are equally interested in its extirpation; both are equally interested in the deliverance of the creature who is tormented by it.

Such a view as this was surely the only one which could satisfy a Jew who believed in the God of Abraham. He had been taught from his infancy that the Lord of Heaven and Earth had revealed Himself to his fathers as the God of Righteousness and Truth. In His righteousness and His truth they were to confide. Thither they were to fly as a refuge in all calamities and troubles. This Truth was an unfathomable depth. But it was their only security. The temptation to honour beings less righteous, less true, was mighty; such unrighteous and false gods were worshiped by the heathen round about; all the evil tendencies in themselves inclined them to take part in the worship. They fell into it; they found themselves degraded and enslaved. What escape had they? The Being whom they had forgotten was what He had ever been. His Mercy and Truth were fixed as the hills, or as the firmament over their heads. When they were wearied with their own inventions; when they had found every reed which they had leaned upon going into their hands and piercing them, the recollection of Him came back to them. There was a time when the thought of One so unlike themselves was terrible; they had fled from Him to creatures whom they could judge according to their own standard,

who were the images of their own good and evil. In their despondency and weakness it was their only comfort to believe there was One *unlike* themselves; One Who was not changeable and capricious as they were. They cried to Him. He heard their cry, and delivered them. He was merciful, and forgave their transgressions. The grace was wonderful, wholly undeserved; till they felt it to be so, they knew not what it meant. It unfolded to them depths in the Divine character of which they had known nothing, or only by the hearing of the ear. But was the goodness strange, because it came from a perfectly Righteous Being? Did this make it more perplexing? Surely not; they felt that only a perfectly Righteous Being *could* be perfectly merciful. To be unmerciful, hard-hearted, selfish, was a part—a chief part—of their own unrighteousness and falsehood. Why, but because they had departed from that blessed Image after which they were formed, that image in which Mercy and Truth are necessarily and eternally united?

When we read the Psalms, we perceive that the Righteousness and Truth of God are the refuge to which holy men betake themselves from enemies within as well as without, from the sins which were crushing down their spirits as much as from the Philistines or Ammonites who threaten to destroy their bodies. They implore Mercy; but they implore it of One Who they believe is willing to bestow it, because He is Righteous. They implore Mercy; but

it is the Mercy of being delivered from unrighteousness; from lying lips and a deceitful tongue. That view of Mercy in which it takes the form of indulgence of sins, tolerance of falsehood in others or themselves, they dare not cherish. Often has it been presented to them, but the yielding to it is nothing less than departing from God; it is one of the very diseases and enemies which they desire Him to deliver them from; one of the iniquities from which by His Mercy and Truth they are purged. Again, that notion of Truth or Justice which confounds it with power or sovereignty; which supposes that its object is to obtain so much vengeance for so much wrong committed; that it must have an equivalent for any delay in the execution of its sentences,—this notion was familiar to them in the religion of the heathen, familiar from the sympathy their evil hearts had with it. But when they turned to Him, their true King, to Him Who was the God of Truth and without iniquity, it was in the confidence that He would abolish those dark idols of their fancy, would teach them to sanctify Him in their hearts, to make Him their fear and Him their dread.

Yes! their fear and dread; for it is indeed, as has been alleged, the doctrine of the Old Testament that the fear of God is the beginning and the end of Wisdom, that by this man departs from evil. But it is the fear of God, to which holy men give this title, not that miserable substitute for it, the fear of punish-

ment. It was the fear of the Lord, the Righteous and Merciful Lord; not the fear of some false being, some creature of their own thoughts, clothed with their own evil qualities. Such creatures they were not to fear; they were to fight continually against the fear of them. The more gracious and blessed He was Who ruled over them, their Creator and Lord, the more were they to cultivate the fear of Him in their hearts. Superstition and idolatry terminate in universal fear; but they begin with the effort to get rid of fear. A man does not like the feeling of an Invisible Presence, of One Who is near him by night and day, spying out all his ways, looking into the depths of his heart. He cannot bear the demand which such a Being makes upon his awe. He longs to trifle. And if he can have gods measurable by his conceptions, approachable by his senses, he can trifle even in his acts of worship. He knows that these things are beneath them, and he can take his revenge for the effort of honouring them by gross familiarity, sometimes by open contempt. What fear he has of beings whose characters he has brought down to the level of his own, who are chiefly his patrons and helpers, lays him under no necessity of departing from evil, has no power to withdraw him from it.

I have spoken of the Old dispensation. Is all changed, as we are sometimes told, in the New? Jesus said, "*He that hath seen Me, hath seen the*

Father." Did any one see in Him that warfare of Truth with Mercy which we have so rashly dreamed of in the eternal Mind? A warfare there was throughout His life upon earth,—with foes seen and unseen,—with Scribes and Pharisees,—with the rulers of the darkness of this world,—with spiritual wickedness in high places. But it was the warfare of Truth and Mercy against untruth and hardness of heart. These were united in all who set themselves to resist His blessed words and acts; the perfect harmony of their opposites was revealed in Him. He showed that Mercy and Truth were divided only by the evil which seeks to destroy both. He showed that it is by their perfect union that iniquity is purged. Before that manifestation, the battle of attributes and qualities which our weakness and sin produce in us might be transferred to God. Holy men, we see, were raised by God's teaching out of the temptation, were forced, by the experience of division in themselves, to demand unity in Him. But when in a human countenance they beheld the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,—and that glory was the fulness of Grace and Truth,—the mist vanished from their eyes. When once the subject nature reflected the absolute Nature, all was calmness, peace, concentrated good. And it was perceived that the Son of God was become the Son of Man, that men might receive the uniting Spirit of God; that the strifes and conflicts of opposing feelings and tempers might be stilled

in them; that they might show forth, in their words and acts to their fellow-men, that Mercy and Truth which, together, and not apart, purge iniquity.

But are we not taught that it is the Sacrifice of Christ which purges iniquity? Yes, brethren, but we are not taught (in the Bible at least) that the Sacrifice of Christ was the sacrifice to one attribute for the sake of bringing it into agreement with another. We are taught that it was the sacrifice of a Son to a Father, Whose Will He perfectly delighted to do; Whose Will, because it was the true and merciful will, was perfectly manifested in the act of self-sacrifice; the only act which could purge the sin of self-will, —that is the sin of the world; which could reconcile the world to God; which could bring the subject will, that had rebelled against the Divine Will, under its gracious government. By the Mercy and Truth of the Father, seeking after the creatures who had become hateful and false because they had ceased to confide in Him, and had made gods like themselves; by the Mercy and Truth of the Son, uniting Himself to those creatures in all their misery and death, that He might raise them to be partakers of His own life; by the Mercy and Truth of the Spirit, stirring up the wills of men that they might bring forth the fruit of merciful and true works, and so be plentifully rewarded with the knowledge of Him; by this Mercy and Truth is the iniquity of our race and of each of its members purged.

And by the fear of this great and holy Name do men depart from evil. Rightly is it said, that the mere belief in One all-pitiful to infirmities and sins, is not enough to keep men from evil, or to raise them out of it. Rightly is it said, that the dread of an unbending Lawgiver pursuing evil with quick, inevitable punishment, is not enough to keep men from evil, or to raise them out of it. The despair of the last conclusion has the same result as the ease of the first. Wretchlessness of unclean living is as much the escape from the bondage of terror, as it is promoted by the expectation of perpetual indulgences. But the fear of One in Whom dwells all Mercy and Truth; to be separated from Whom is to be separated from Mercy and Truth; from Whom comes restoration as well as life; Who seeks to deliver us from the misery that is in us, that we may possess the treasures that are in Him; this fear, when it is entertained in the heart, when it penetrates the whole man, will keep us from every evil way. Nor ever let us fancy that the revelation of God which the New Testament contains has made that fear obsolete or unsuitable to our condition. The Name which is uttered there is the Name of absolute, eternal Truth and Love; therefore it should make us tremble more than any which was heard in the old time. An Israelite might break in upon the bounds of Sinai, might mock its thunders, with less peril to his moral being than a Christian can receive continually the pledges of Christ's Re-

demption, of His fellowship with man, while he cultivates in himself all the tempers from which Christ came to redeem us, the mind which is most contrary to His mind.

Yes! brethren, this is the awfulness of our position! It is our *moral* being which is at stake. It is the second death of all trust, affection, sincerity, or, in Solomon's words, of Mercy and Truth, in ourselves and in the world, that threatens us! This death, to which all other punishments are as nothing, may be stealing upon us in the midst of outward respectability,—under the shadow of religious ordinances,—whilst our profession is the fairest in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world around us. If ever any of us find that it is even so, if we suspect that the life within has been perishing, that we have been growing less merciful and less true, while we have been using seemly phrases and punctually fulfilling what are called religious duties,—if that fearful discovery comes to us at any moment,—oh, let us beware how we use it! First of all, let us not try to persuade ourselves that we must be mistaken,—that our consciences have been too cruel with us. God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. He tells us these secrets. Next, let us not try by any artificial method to cultivate the fear which has been wanting in us, to produce an affected reverence for the outward thing or shrine, when the reverence for the inner Presence has departed. That course will

make us more false; probably it will make us more unmerciful, for we shall comfort ourselves by condemning those who we suppose are less devout than we are. And lastly, do not let us cast off God's ordinances, as if they had been the causes of our insincerity. They have been true—we have been liars. They have been saying to us, "He who is Truth and Mercy has come nigh to you,—has pardoned you,—has made peace with you; He would have imparted to you His Mercy and Truth, that you might show forth the image of both in your dealings with men,. If in your shame and confusion you will now turn to Him, owning that you have no such qualities of your own, and that without Him you never can have them, He will show you that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that His Mercy and Truth have still power to purge iniquity; that He can give you that Fear by which men depart from evil."

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

November 7, 1858.

2 Corinthians ix. 6.

"THIS I SAY, THAT HE WHICH SOWETH SPARINGLY SHALL REAP ALSO SPARINGLY; AND HE WHICH SOWETH BOUNTIFULLY SHALL REAP ALSO BOUNTIFULLY."

This text is often appealed to with great triumph by those who say that men can only be excited to good deeds here by the prospect of a tangible recompense for them in a future state. "The writer," they remind us, "is St. Paul, the Apostle who is supposed by Protestants to have laid the axe to all notions of human merit. His meaning cannot be mistaken. He is exhorting the Corinthians to make a collection for their poorer brethren. He is asking for their money. He affirms that if they give their money liberally, they will receive liberally from God. And can language," they continue, "be more natural or reasonable than this? Do not your preachers fall into it almost inevitably? You are shocked at the notion that alms are an offering for sins. You will denounce by the hour those who encourage men to think that some of their offences may be overlooked,

or even that they may obtain actual rewards in Heaven, if they relinquish a portion of their earthly treasures. But is there one of your charity sermons which does not leave the inference upon the minds of those who hear, that their condition may be better if they help the cause for which the preacher is pleading, —may be worse if they are deaf to his rhetoric? Draw what nice distinctions you please, you suggest that opinion when your words are effective. And what is the reason that they are so often ineffective, but this, that men do not know whether you mean what you say? Sometimes we suppose that we are to take St. Paul literally, and calculate the harvest by the seed that is sown. Sometimes you speak as if the one was wholly independent of the other. And the result is what might be expected. The benevolent and religious efforts of your flocks are uncertain and desultory; beginning under the pressure of some sudden impulse, presently abandoned because there is no sufficient motive for persevering in them. Can it be otherwise? In ordinary affairs we act upon the Apostle's maxim. We expect results from our diligence. In those affairs which are, you say, the most important, it seems as if we are to assume, or half to assume, a directly opposite principle."

These arguments evidently strike at some inconsistency in our modes of speaking, at some feebleness in our modes of acting, which ought to be examined that it may be corrected. They appeal to that prac-

tical sense which Englishmen value and must value above all refinements of divinity. They appeal also to our trade temper. It is very hard for us to divest ourselves of habits of thought in one region which we cultivate in another. If we suppose that our main business on earth is to lay out so much capital that we may secure a good return, we shall — whatever our formal professions may be—use the same measure in our expectations of the world after death. We may talk against Romanism till we are weary, but if this be Romanism, a nation which gives itself up to money-getting and gambling, must be Romanist or atheistic, or both in one.

I. As I am anxions to interpret St. Paul's language strictly, I must ask you to observe that his comparison is not drawn from trade. He did not avoid commercial allusions or illustrations when they came in his way. The Epistle to the Ephesians abounds in such. He speaks of the goods which were left in bond by the purchaser, of the seal he put upon them, of the earnest-money he paid for them, of the time when he would come to redeem them. But in this instance the ordinary operations of husbandry, not the speculations of the merchant, supply him with his analogy. He does not speak of making a venture, but of conforming to a law. The savage who depends for his supplies of food upon the accidents of the chase is evidently more of a speculator, in the common sense of the word, than the civilized man who

tills his ground and sows it at the appointed season. The one trusts in part to his skill and dexterity; in part to chance. His acts are irregular, done with a prospect, though an uncertain prospect, of a reward; when he gets it, he boasts over his less fortunate rival. The other does best when he attends most carefully to certain facts over which he has no control whatever; he trusts neither in his skill nor in chance; his acts are orderly; he expects a result which must be common, not particular, which other men must share as well as himself. His fields may be more productive than those of his neighbour; but it is *the* harvest he must look to; the sun will not shine or the rains fall at certain irregular seasons to please him. This is St. Paul's comparison, considered generally. Let us inquire more minutely what seed it is which he required the Corinthians to sow, and what harvest he encouraged them to hope that they might reap.

II. I am not at all eager to explain away the context of the chapter. It is true that he wished the Corinthians to make collections for the poor. Let it be fully admitted then that money was to be the seed, or part of the seed, which they were bidden not to scatter sparingly. St. Paul does not indulge in refinements, and we must not indulge in them if we would understand him. He wished the Corinthians to contribute of their substance, of their gold. Other things along with that; certainly that if they had it.

But if you look at his exhortation, you will see that he talks much of *cheerful* giving, of giving not *grudgingly* or of necessity. Something then was demanded of them, not only *besides* the money, but *before* it. The precept would not be obeyed if this were wanting. St. Paul was certain the seed would be sown sparingly, capriciously, unprofitably, unless there were this power to direct the hand of the sower. These were great demands—cheerfulness and a ready mind. How were they to be procured? They were not inseparable accidents from the possession of the money surely. St. Paul intimates that they often belonged most to those who had the least of it. Could they be obtained by the help of calculation? If a man said to himself, "So much of this wealth which I love must be given up, in order that I may avert some future penalty or get some future reward"—would the cheerful will, the ready mind, be formed either at once or gradually? I apprehend the man who presented that thought to himself would begin with grudging, and would grudge more and more each time he forced himself to diminish his hoards. Under the pressure of some great conscience-pang, with death staring him in the face, they would be dispersed freely. "It is worth while to incur any risk now. I may not have my wealth long to enjoy. Why not devote it to the poor or the Church, as well as to my heirs?" But how sure we are that this disposition will last just as long as the terror lasts!

Take away that, and what has become of it? I do not mean that it is at all impossible to keep up a certain habit of fear, a pressure which shall never be quite unfelt. But those are not practical people, —they are wild dreamers—who say that by such a process a man will acquire the state of mind which the Apostle demands,—that he will not be hindered from acquiring it. We attribute an influence to this motive which in the nature of things it cannot have, because we resolutely ignore the existence of another principle in ourselves and our fellow-men wholly unlike this, absolutely opposed to this. We do not acknowledge that there *is* a power working upon us to produce a ready and loving mind, and that our true thoughts and just acts proceed from this. We suppose that the miserable calculations which are disturbing and destroying the sincerity of our doings, are really the springs of what is good in them.

It was not so with St. Paul. And therefore I conceive that the passage before us is entirely consistent with those which people have fancied that it contradicts, or at least qualifies. He assumes that there is a Spirit of God, a Spirit of Love who is stirring hearts that of themselves would be torpid to living energy, to steady labours, to acts of which there is no obvious and immediate result. He bids them simply obey this Spirit. Then their acts will be simple and orderly, like those of the husbandman who casts seed into the ground, losing it out of his sight, trusting it

to secret powers which are not under his direction to ripen it. His acts will not be like those of the wild hunter, who is always considering what he can get by his bow, who has no belief in hidden and transmuting processes, who knows nothing of law or a lawgiver, all whose efforts are therefore poor, fragmentary, and uncertain.

"Do not sow sparingly," the Apostle seems to say. "Sow freely, ungrudgingly. For the free ungrudging Spirit of God is working with you to will and to do of His good pleasure. You are striving against Him, you are refusing to be made the instruments of His loving purposes, when you dole out with a niggardly hand that which He has given you, in trust for those who are members of the same family with yourselves. If you sow sparingly, you are not sowing as God sows. You are not acting as the servants and the children of the great Husbandman. You show that you think of Him as a taskmaster with whom you are bargaining, for whom you only make sacrifices because you expect him to pay you for them."

III. Such are the inferences we should draw from the clause of the text which concerns sowing. But what does he understand by the reaping? What are those rich results which are to follow if the seed is freely dispersed, those poor results which must be looked for where there is a mean, grudging use of it? The Apostle does not give us much help in this passage to ascertain his meaning. He takes it for

granted that the Corinthians knew what they were to hope for. They had heard the Gospel to little purpose if they did not. His own words elsewhere, and still more our Lord's, may remove all doubt from our minds on this subject.

1. First, then, Christ clearly holds out to us a promise of very rich blessings to come *from our fellow-creatures* in such passages as these: "*Give, and it shall be given you; full measure, pressed down, and running over, will men give into your bosoms.*" Here we have the assurance that those will experience a larger return of free, uncalculating love, who have a free, uncalculating love in their own hearts, and who show it forth in their acts. Those, as He expressed it at the same time, who give, "*hoping for nothing again,*" who have no notion of laying out their capital to advantage, who communicate their gold, their hearts, their very selves, to those among whom they live, because they sympathize with them, will find a sympathy greater than they can dream of. It must often have seemed to the Apostles as if this promise—like others which yet came from One Who does not deceive—were not fulfilled. St. Paul complained to the Corinthians, that the more he loved the less he was loved. The preachers of the Gospel seemed as if they were hated by men because they carried to them a message of peace. They had to sustain themselves under such thoughts by remembering that the servant was not above the

Master; that He Who showed most love found most hatred; that He said, "They have hated both me and my Father." And by degrees they learnt the truth of His other words through these. They were sure that the Divine Love had not been thrown away. If it called forth all that was most hostile to it, this was a homage to its power. By degrees it would be found also that it had called forth in a still more wonderful manner that which corresponded to it, that which was of its own nature. Out of the hardest rock, waters would gush forth, when it was struck by the rod of the true guide and deliverer. If the Cross was the great sign how men struggle against their dearest Friend, it would at last, so He declared, *draw all to itself*. The Apostles knew what a might of resistance there was to it in themselves. They knew also its mightier attraction. And if in their own persons they had to experience the enmity which it provoked, they also knew themselves to be the objects of an affection, of which they could not measure the depth or the height,—an affection which would have been probably dangerous to them if it had not been checked and counteracted by a number of unfriendly, ungenial influences here; but which they were sure would have free scope for developing itself when the vanity that perverted it into a selfish gratification had been burnt up, and when they understood and realized, what here they believed, that they were members of one body, in which if one suffer

all must suffer, if one rejoice all must rejoice. On the whole, then, this was a kind of fruit which they had received imperfectly, which they might expect in fullness hereafter; but it was a fruit which they could not produce or ripen by making it the object of their speculations. So far as they did that, they blighted and killed it in the bud; they introduced barrenness and rottenness into the stock from which it was to grow. If this is the kind of reward we desire, the notion of earning it by merit is one which we must diligently cast aside.

2. But our Lord held forth another prize to His disciples. "*Fear not,*" he said to St. Peter, when he was astonished at the fishes which had come into the net at His word, "*henceforth ye shall catch men.*" The Apostle to whom these words were addressed had many of those thoughts in his own heart which have been fostered in the Church that calls him its head, and in Churches that disclaim him as their head. "*We have left all, and followed thee,*" he said to our Lord, "*what shall we have therefore?*" He was told that they were to have more than they had left, or than they knew of. But it was clear that they must pass through a tremendous discipline—a fiery baptism —before they could either receive the good things which were coming to them, or would care to receive them. They had given up their father's ship and their occupation, to do Christ's work; by-and-by they thought they should have their wages, and be allowed

rest. He never gave them a hint of such felicity. Those who had used five talents or two talents well, He said, should have five talents or two talents more. They should have rule over five cities or over ten cities. The reward was to be fresh work, a larger sphere of action, a more responsible stewardship. To be the distributors and doers of good was not to be a way of getting good for themselves, it was to be itself the good; if they did not enter into it and enjoy it and give thanks for it, but only counted it taskwork which they were to endure for a certain time, they could not be ministers of the kingdom of Heaven; they could not enter into the joy of their Lord. For the chief of all in that kingdom was the servant of all; the joy of Christ was to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. The great gift of all, therefore, the gift of His Spirit, was bestowed on the Apostles, not as their dismissal from labour, but as the qualification for labour. By this Spirit they were to bear witness of Christ's redemption, to catch men, to gather out a Church. By it they were raised above the miserable question, "What shall we *have* then?" to feel that Selfishness was the great curse and damnation from which Christ came to set them free, that Self-Sacrifice is the law of the Universe, that this part of the Universe is broken and divided and unhappy because we are fighting against that law and trying to repeal it, that it must be that which all creatures obey in every region where Christ's power

is fully confessed, and His Father worshiped as their Father.

3. But though a continual increase and enlargement of work is one part of Christ's promise to His faithful disciples, it is equally true that He speaks of a Rest which He has prepared for them, and which they are to enter. Rest and work have sustained each other in this world; either has been a curse without the other. It must be so throughout the whole Universe over which He rules, Who reveals Himself to us as creating all things and renewing them each day, and as resting with delight in that which He has made, because it is very good. In no future condition which is subject to His law, of which His will is the author, can there be a rest which is incompatible with activity, an activity that does not imply rest, and is not consummated in it. The Scriptures do not leave us in ignorance of the nature of the rest. They speak of it as the image of God's rest and satisfaction. We enter into it in proportion as we know Him, in proportion as we are satisfied with that which satisfies Him. All our fevers and restlessness come not from overmuch of toil, they beset those most who have most idleness. But they come from a dream of something which we are to get for ourselves here or elsewhere; of something which is necessary to our happiness; and yet which the Creator of the world does not desire us to have; something which, by one means or other, we must obtain, in spite of

His disinclination to grant it. This craving, whether it takes what is called a worldly form or what is called a religious form, whether it confessedly turns to the things of earth or is apparently and nominally occupied with the things of Heaven, must be destructive of peace, must be inhuman, must be ungodly. For that peace of God which passes understanding is not a distant thing, which we must go up into the sky or down into Hell to seek after. It is with us continually; embracing us; the source of all that is harmonious in the lives and societies of men, reflected in the order of the external world. And because it is that which binds us together in one, he who would have it as his own refuses it; he who would vindicate it for all men, and invites all men into the participation of it, discovers its nature and begins to taste the blessedness of it. He does not strive with God, but yields to Him; believes that His Will is the loving, preserving, restoring Will; reposes in that.

I think then, my brethren, that the text we have considered today, instead of encouraging the doctrine which St. Paul denounces elsewhere, is one of the best and most effectual warnings against it. Once learn from him what seed God would have us sow, what harvest He would have us desire, and our dreams of some meritorious services which are to earn eternal life must seem more monstrous than they ever did. Yes! and the practical English sense,

which the dealers in these false motives try to enlist on their side, will be found utterly to discard them. Plain, palpable, material gratifications which can be seized, which do bring a moment's reward, will not be relinquished for the dim possibility of some advantage in another condition of existence. It is true that our language respecting rewards is fluctuating and confused; it is true that our benevolence is often of a very uncertain, *dilettante* kind; it is true that the two facts are closely connected—perhaps as cause and effect. But it is not true that we are too much opposed to the doctrine that men must be bribed to do right. We are afraid to dispense with bribes even when they manifestly fail of their purpose. We are afraid to tell men boldly that Selfishness is not the law of their lives, and every act of kindness and duty a graceful and meritorious deviation from the law. We are afraid to say that no man can live to himself or die to himself, if he wishes it ever so.

St. Paul however held that opinion, and therefore he exhorted the Corinthians to make a collection for the poor, not as some act of virtue or sanctity, but as part of their regular business. They were to do it just as they were to sow the ground, just as they were to care for their children, or pursue their common occupations. The care of our children, the performance of our duties as lawyers, physicians, tradesmen, just as much implies a relation to other human beings,

habitual obligations to them, daily and hourly self-sacrifice, as gifts to the poor or labours for them. The family will be neglected, the profession and trade will be neglected, just as much as the poor will be neglected, by any man who once resolutely acts upon the principle that he is sent into the world to care for himself. Let that principle be carried into practice as consistently as it is proclaimed in theory,—let men actually become what they are always trying to become,—and the work of the world is at an end; it is not Heaven we have given up; we have renounced the blessings of earth, and have fallen into a condition more savage than any that has ever yet been known. Do you never fear this result? Are you not sometimes terrified when you think of the indolence, the purposelessness, the hopelessness, which you see among young men? You want to make them work for any object, let it be the poorest, meanest possible. But you do not know how to make your ends low enough. You try competition for immediate rewards; that fails, or only succeeds for a moment. You try competition for distant rewards, the fear of distant punishments; that is less effectual still. Oh, try one method more! Do not speak to the base, covetous spirit in man, which Christ came to cast out. Speak to that which He came to rescue and redeem. Hold out to that a hope, a sure and certain hope, not a precarious hope; a hope safer than that of the husbandman waiting for the harvest. Speak

of a Righteous Kingdom which has been established in the world. Say that it will assuredly be manifested, whether we crave for it or no. Say that in this Kingdom the great blessing is to work, to work for a perfectly good and faithful Master, to rest in His wisdom and truth. It is the message which men want to hear. For there is in the idlest human being a crying for occupation, an impatience of the wretchedness which falls to the lot of those who spend all the day idle. There is a craving to know if there is any one willing to hire them, and who He is, and what His vineyard is. There is a secret cry, in the most exclusive man, for a reward at the end of the day, which shall be general, not special, not doled out according to a narrow measure of ours, but according to the grace of Him Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not. There is an inward feeling, in the most selfish man, that Selfishness has been his torment, and that the Christ Who breaks this yoke is the only Saviour of him and of the Universe.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

November 14, 1858.

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2 Corinthians iv. 18.

"WHILE WE LOOK NOT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN, BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN: FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORAL; BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL."

We sometimes speak of Time as a river, and of Eternity as the ocean into which it flows. Whatever truth there may be in this comparison, and I cannot doubt that it conveys a truth to some minds, it certainly is very likely to mislead us. It connects itself—I will not say with the *thought,* but—with a kind of vague *impression,* that while we are here in this world, we are floating down the stream of Time, and that Death first brings us into contact with Eternity. A number of phrases which have crept from popular discourses into scientific works on theology, and have at last become a portion of its ordinary dialect, embody this notion. You will perceive that the words I have just read to you suggest a very different one. St. Paul says that things seen are temporal (*πρόσκαιρα*); the things unseen eternal. He does not describe one as present, the other as future. He does not tell us that

here he is only among passing things, that hereafter he shall be among permanent things. He feels that he is in the midst of both, here on this earth. The visible world is about him; he has senses wherewith to take it in, a heart capable of enjoying it. He has an invisible world also about him; his senses do not take it in; his heart tremblingly confesses it, sometimes would fly from it altogether. Nevertheless he is sure that he has faculties for conversing with that invisible world; he is sure that his heart will not be content with any other. He is not truly a man, except so far as these faculties are awake, so far as they have their proper objects, so far as his spirit is occupied with that which satisfies it. His senses may be alive, but he is not alive except he has something which they do not testify of. Nay, properly speaking, they are not alive; their reports are confused, irregular, inconsistent; they cannot look the world in the face; they are simply overpowered by it, unless he is up and at work, to direct and govern them.

But how can he attain this power over them? Who will uphold *him?* Who will show him that other world to which he belongs, of which he thinks he is an inheritor, but which seems full only of indistinct phantoms? This, St. Paul teaches us, is the very end of God's Revelations. To show men that Kingdom which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive;—to show it them, that they may have their home in it;

that they may acknowledge it as their own proper dwelling-place,—this is the purpose of all those Divine discoveries which the Bible records; especially of that last discovery which the Son of God made when He took flesh, when He preached, saying, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;*" when He suffered the sharpness of death, that He might open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

For He opened to men the nature of GOD. He showed them the Image after which they were created. There had been righteous kings and righteous subjects. He revealed that Righteousness from which the Righteousness of both had been derived. There had been men who had taught Truth, and who suffered for Truth. He could say, "I am the Truth." He could exhibit the fullness of Truth both in Teaching and in Suffering. There had been stout fighters on earth; there had been Messengers of Peace. He unveiled the perfect untroubled Peace, which is in the midst of tribulation. There had been hearts full of Joy, hearts full of Sorrow. The Divine Joy was seen in its perfection in the Man of Sorrows.

The Kingdom of God, therefore, which Christ preached, which He said was at hand, which He manifested, is called the Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. These are no longer qualities in the minds of men, subjected to the accidents of those minds. They belong to the Substance of God.

I. The first words of St. Paul require no verbal confirmation or illustration. The truth of them is demonstrated to every man by every year, day, hour of his existence on earth. Spring and autumn witness of them alike. He hears them as much in the songs which welcome the newborn infant into the light as in the knell over the departed man. But supposing these words, 'Things *seen* are temporal,' were changed into the words, 'Things *present* are temporal,' I believe that instead of the conscience of human beings going along with them, it would utter its deep groan, its solemn protest against them. I can bear to contemplate the vicissitudes of the seasons; the death of the old, the birth of the new; I can perceive in this change and variety an infinite beauty, which it would be an unspeakable calamity to lose, just because I am sure that this *beauty* is not for an hour or an instant; that *it* belongs to the permanent; that *it* will not pass away. I can bear to see the fading of a particular flower, let it be ever so bright and glorious, because I know that the brightness and glory are not for a season; that they have not ceased to be, will not cease to be. And if it is so in natural things, what clearer and fuller assurance is in our hearts, that no one sympathy, no one affection, no gentleness, no faith, hope, or love, no devotion to truth, which has been seen in any human creature can ever perish. It may, alas! be temporary—be but for a season—

in that man who has exhibited it. It may be a flash of light followed by a thicker darkness, a darkness to be felt. But the light has been there, and it has made known something which is deeper than the foundations of the earth. It came from God; it belongs to God. Come about what will to the outside of things, this unseen thing—this which has been present to me, which I have felt, experienced, conversed with,—this shall not sink into the grave of nature, shall never be numbered among its trophies. The resurrection of Christ affirms to all generations that it shall not. The Spirit who works to quicken, preserve, and restore, is the pledge that it shall not. These echo and fulfil the oath of the Eternal Father that it shall not.

Yes, the emblems of decay and death—of decay and death to the shrines of all that has been dearest and most precious to us—are not intolerable, because only the things seen are temporal; because when we pierce through the sensible veil and ask for that which is, we meet with that concerning which St. Paul declares, "This is not for a season; this is eternal."

II. And if it would be utterly oppressive to think of the present as belonging only to Time, so I think we should be lost in hopeless perplexity if we identified Eternity with an interminable past or an interminable future. Is the eternity behind that course of ages, perhaps to be extended indefinitely, during which

Geologists find the earth passing through its different mutations before it became fitted to be the abode of man? I do not lament the strength of the evidence that such ages were. Thank God for permitting us to hear of them, if it were only because the dreariness of the contemplation drives us to think of that which *was*, of that fixed, unchangeable love which presided over these changes, and was to bring forth a divine and satisfactory Creation at last. What repose amidst all that long struggle of life with death, to hear the sounds, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men*"!

And if we want this relief from the Eternity behind, oh, the distraction, the anguish which the heart and understanding of men experience in trying by the aid of dates and myriads of numbers to meditate the Eternity before! It is an appalling, crushing process, and it is not an honest one. And, therefore, after a while it is discarded. No one perseveres in it, however much he may feel the importance, the necessity, of bringing Eternity before him. He feels that he is weltering amidst hopeless contradictions; he may try to keep up the sense of endlessness, by supplying continual fuel to his fears; but he cannot. He casts it off as a phantom of superstition, even

though there is a perpetual witness within him that phantoms and superstitions belong to Time and Sense; that Eternity is the great Reality, which alone gives reality to that which he sees.

And is it not, brethren, the revelation of the same Word Who was before all worlds; the same Son Who dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and delighted to accomplish His purposes of creative love,—is it not this which makes the thought of ages out of ages to come, not a vision of despair, but an ever new unfolding hope? To think of Him as the eternal ground of all things, from Whom they come, by Whom they consist, in Whom they shall be gathered up; Who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; the same when He said, "Let there be light," as when He prayed in the garden, "Let this cup pass from Me;" the same when He rose from the dead, and said, "Peace be unto you;" the same in His care of the Church and Universe through every period; the same when He shall come again in the glory of His Father to judge the quick and the dead,—this is possible; this is an eternity which we can contemplate. For in it is included the endurance and permanence of every person and thing that the Word has created and redeemed. Out of it proceed those cheering and wonderful messages: "Of that which the Father has has given Me I will lose nothing; "Given a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" "Those that sleep in Christ shall God bring with Him."

Such an Eternity is not cast in the mould of time; not an interminable series of years; but a solid possession for each moment; a treasure which we are to claim now, that we may hold it, into whatever new circumstances life or death may bring us.

III. St. Paul speaks of looking at, of looking into, the things which are unseen and eternal. That he regards as the highest privilege, as the proper occupation of a man. No one knew better than he did that a man cannot be always busy with the future; that he ought not to be; that he would be a useless, restless, bad man, if he were. We have work to do *here;* we have work to do *now;* and it must be done, and whoso shrinks from it, or does it with a half heart, because he is dreaming of good things to come elsewhere, sins against God. But we do not turn men away from any one task or toil which is laid upon them, when we tell them that they have a right to look into eternal things; that they are living, moving, having their being in the midst of these things. It is steady, habitual converse with these which makes men free and bold to act; which causes their acts to be the result of deliberate purpose, not of sudden impulse; which takes them out of the sway of what is visible and changeable, that they may rule it and make it an instrument of fulfilling the purposes of its Creator. If we bid a poor toiling brother occupy himself with the thoughts of death, and of that which shall happen to him after death, we sometimes

give him comfort, because he associates death with the thought of rest. But ofttimes we seem to mock him, for what opportunity has he to speculate about that which is to be, when that which is presses upon him with such a weight? But the teacher is not a mocker who says to him: "There is a world of invisible treasures about thee upon which thou mayest enter at once, though thou wilt not exhaust them in millions of years. That which is close beside thee is more precious than that which is afar off. That which is thy own, and which thou mayest claim as thine, is worth all the tangible things which thou couldst grasp, if thou hadst a hundred hands." I say, he who bears this message, tells the poor man a secret by which he may be raised from a serf into a free human being.

And what he speaks to one who is busy with manual toil, and who is ground to the earth with poverty, is just what the man who has most leisure for all intellectual pursuits, who has all outward enjoyments within his reach, wants to hear as much. The leisure to think about all manner of things which present themselves to his eye and ear may be the very temptation to forget that he himself is infinitely more wonderful than they are,—this power of exploring a vast circumference of objects may be that which prevents him from seeking for a centre. His facilities for obtaining that which he can *call* his own, and from which he can exclude others, may make him

utterly ignorant of that which is his own, of that which makes his life a reality and not a shadow. And so the busy professional man may become a slave to his work, at last a slave to the mere material advantages which his work procures; the man who has a world of treasures at his command may become a slave of those treasures, and may discover that they are always escaping him when he wants to turn them into use. And both will become feverish and restless, incapable of fulfilling their common tasks heartily; incapable of drawing delights from the things which they would count it their greatest calamity to lose. This dependence on outward circumstances is what a heathen contemporary of St. Paul, who had probably never heard his name, pronounced the real servitude; expressing his thankfulness that his own birth, in a state of outward, nominal servitude, had been one means of teaching him to rise out of it.

IV. So much Epictetus can tell us. Such lessons we have heard from our childhood; they have become very commonplaces to us. What further message can an Apostle bring to us? One that shall make us *willing* to turn from the things visible that hold us captive, to the invisible things that will make us free. For let us not hide the truth from ourselves. We cling to the one because we are afraid of the other. There is a Conscience which makes cowards of us all. I do not like to venture into those dark chambers of my soul's imagery. "I expect to find nothing there

but grisly shapes, recollections of the past, anticipations of the future, which will haunt me in all my works and pleasures. What charms have you for laying these spectres?—what poppy or mandragora that will dull or destroy this sense of an ever-present Self,—an eternal Self, which may make a Hell for me in the midst of Paradise? Oh, draw me not away from a region in which I can hear some soothing melodies, can see some visions of loveliness, however soon they may pass away, only that you may bring me to a region where there is only just light enough to show me the shadows that are cast from my own body! If I am to dwell with those shadows, and with those only, for ever, let me have something else to gaze upon while I can." This, brethren, is the true cause why we cannot profit by the noble teaching of Epictetus; why we could not profit by St. Paul's, if he had *only* told us to look at the things which are unseen and eternal. Men tremble at eternity, whether they think of it as present or to come; they must tremble at it, unless there comes forth from it a Gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is no sham terror, begotten by the arts of priests, which I feel when the thought flashes on me, "I am an eternal being. I cannot shake eternity from me. It belongs to me; it goes with me where I go; it stays with me where I stay." Death *then* has no look of repose; if it is a sleep, it is, as Hamlet guessed, a sleep full of frightful dreams. It stands out, in no poetical allegory, in stern fact, as

the twin-sister of Sin; they seem to be *the* powers, *the* realities of the universe. I shall think them so unless I can hear a voice from heaven saying to me, "No; they are not the powers, the realities of the universe! They are the contradictions of its order; the lies against its Author. And He has Himself come down into this earth of ours, in this flesh of ours, to struggle with them, vanquish them, trample upon them, that you may do the like."

Unless I believed that the voice which bade me turn away from the visible things to invisible, eternal things, was a voice which said, "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest;*" unless I believed that when I turned my eyes round to look at the eternal things which are near me, I should find not the dark Demon of Self, but Christ the deliverer from Self; unless I thought that His death proclaimed a real conquest of Sin and Death, His resurrection an actual new birth and new life to our race, I dare not invite any one to abandon the coarsest, most sensual gratifications, however ignominious and shameful I may esteem them, however sure I may be of the end to which they will lead; I should have nothing solid to offer in exchange for them.

But if I may speak of a Lamb of God that has taken away the sin of the world; if I may affirm that He is with us, and is ready to give us that eternal life which was with the Father, and which He has manifested to us; I can boldly ask one and all of

you to look at, and to look into, the things which are unseen and eternal. For I am sure God is Himself urging us, helping us, to claim this the great privilege of our humanity. I am sure His Spirit is with us always, to educate us into those exercises of inward affection, faith, and trust, to which naturally we are disinclined, as we are to every manly effort, however great may be the after-reward of it. I am sure that if we do walk among things temporal as if the eternal treasures were about us, and as if we were resolved not to lose them, they will unveil themselves to us more and more. The Love and the Goodness and the Truth which lie at the foundation of the universe will come out to us through all the thick clouds which our selfishness and the selfishness of men have raised to hide them from us. We shall learn that we have all such a property in them as we have in the air and the light; that there is in them the power to assimilate us to their own nature, to make our acts in conformity with them. And then, with what opened eyes shall we look on the things which are visible and temporal! With what living beauty will they be clothed; a beauty cast upon them from that deeper, permanent world which they encircle! How will all the fixed order, and the orderly alternations of Nature, speak to us of an enduring Majesty, of an Unchangeable Truth, which can yet exhibit itself in infinite varieties, can catch and appropriate every passing, momentary light, can reflect

itself in the ocean or in the dewdrop! And how will the endless flux and reflux of life, or what is called life, in cities, drive us to seek, in our daily walks, in our ordinary tasks, for something in which we may rest, for a home and peace that outward tumults cannot interrupt. Surely, if we seek, we shall find. Every face, however furrowed with sorrow, or distorted by passion, or stupefied by self-indulgence, will be a witness to us of Eternity. For the sorrow, the passion, the self-indulgence of which that face testifies, are the enemies with which each of us—because he is a spiritual being, because he is the citizen of an eternal kingdom—has to wrestle day by day. If we think they have triumphed in one or another, that thought may make us tremble for him and for ourselves. But it must not make us forget that Christ has died to redeem that man's spirit and ours, to vanquish his enemies and ours. To lose that faith is to make the visible things which God has given us richly to enjoy, our prison-house; to make the invisible things which we shrink from, and yet confess, our perpetual torment. To hold it fast is to wait for the full revelation of that Eternal Life which is in the Son of Man; to look not for a new Heaven only, but a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

November 21, 1858.

PSALM CXVIII. 25.

"MY SOUL CLEAVETH UNTO THE DUST: QUICKEN THOU ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD."

WE call the Psalms the Psalms of David. It is not that we know how many he wrote of them. It is that they are the cries and prayers of a king; of one who is learning to obey and to rule, to suffer and to subdue; who is fighting a battle; who is fighting it for others as well as himself; who has the sense and the certainty of being crushed unless he can find a help which is not in himself, and which no mortal allies can give him. It is not a collection of fine sentences or lofty aspirations. The writer cares not the least that we should know what he is saying and thinking for the sake of any credit he can get for his sayings or his thoughts. He utters in the ears of God what would be most likely to destroy his reputation and respectability among men. His prayers have become a heritage for generations, because his conflicts were the conflicts of a human being with

the foes of human beings. We count them ours, because we are sure that the prayers were drawn forth out of a man by One who was educating him to know what kinghood and manhood is, and who would teach us the same lesson. We cannot let the Psalms pass into the world of books and letters; they must always be associated with personal effort and anguish.

I do not know whether David wrote the 119th Psalm or any part of it. But I find this characteristic in every verse of it. Though there is less to connect it than almost any of the Psalms with passing events, though it speaks of no Ishmaelites or Moabites, though it might have been written in a lonely chamber or a prison, there is the same personality in it, the same struggle; therefore the same power of adapting itself to all times and places, which you find in the rest. The sentence I have taken out of it contains, I think, the very spirit of the Psalms, the very spirit of all prayer.

I. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust.* There is nothing to guide us in determining what were the circumstances of the man who said this; not the least need to inquire what they may have been. The words fit all circumstances. They carry us out of the region of circumstances. He may have been wonderfully prosperous. He may have suffered the loss of all things. Friends may have been flattering him for his wisdom or zeal or elevation of mind. He may not have had a friend left in the wide world. He may

have frequented the Temple every day. He may have been surrounded with the worshipers of Baal. He may have committed great sins. His course may have been quiet and innocent throughout. In any of these conditions a man may cry, *My soul cleaveth unto the dust.* Whatever good or ill luck may have befallen me—or may be attending me—that is *my* state. There is a heavy weight upon *me.* You tell me I have great reason to be thankful for the good things that have been bestowed upon me. Perhaps so, but I find no thankfulness in me. I can repeat words which express the feeling; I can, if I try, invent them. But they correspond to nothing within: they are not mine. You say that I ought to hope for better days, if there is much against me at present. No doubt: but hope is just what I am utterly incapable of; *with* that I might do anything, but where is that to come from? You tell me that I should exert myself to shake off the sloth, the despondency which is preying upon me. I know that as well as you. But sloth and despondency are not raindrops that hang about my clothes; they are not even the clothes themselves; they have got hold of myself; they appear to be parts of my nature. All your advice, therefore, is sadly thrown away. You may censure, you may scorn as much as you will; you may exalt those fortunate people upon whom some energy, some strong purpose, has been bestowed. By speaking of them you awaken my envy; but you

increase, not diminish my despair. Their treasures have not been conferred upon me."

I am describing, you will say, a kind of character which is common enough, but one which certainly does not belong to a king; rather to a serf; one, therefore, which answers very ill to the person whom we identify with the book of Psalms. True; if the king has nothing in common with the serf; if there are no tendencies in the first which may sink him to the level of the other; or if he is to spend all his years without discovering those tendencies. But a king who is after God's own heart—a king trained in His school—will not be left in ignorance of a fact which it is all-important for him to be acquainted with; he is certain to be a bad ruler—a vigorous or a feeble tyrant—if he supposes that *he* belongs to one race, and the great majority of his subjects to another. No! he must learn by some discipline or another that he has a soul, which,—by very slight causes indeed, by some sickness of body, something less than that, a trivial disappointment, or the mere satiety of success,—may be brought down to the dust, may cleave to it, may be utterly unable to lift itself up. Just there—just in that portion of him which appeared most royal,—will the degradation be felt. He cannot throw the blame of the baseness, cowardice, impotency of which he is conscious, upon any thing or upon any person else. He must sternly confess, "It is *my* soul which has sunk into this torpor, over which this palsy has crept." As we are told in

more than one of the Psalms, the attempt to rally from it by recalling better and happier states of mind which were once his, proves quite ineffectual. What he can do now, what he is now, is the question. All recollections of the past or dreams of the future which evade that question, are mere mockeries.

This is a baptism of fire for a man to pass through who has had a clear sense of his own power, who is certain that he wants that power for work. Very many frauds he will practise upon himself; many attempts he will make to convince himself that he can still carry gates and tear lions like kids; that his strength is not really departed from him. The commonest fraud—oh, how common!—is the exercise of a keen wit in detecting the errors and falsehoods of other men, in showing how contemptible all the people about him are. "I can do that still; I have this critical judging power left. And if I can look down on mankind, must I not, in some sense, be better than they?" Poor self-deceiver, self-mocker! Thou knowest all the folly and feebleness of thy fellow-creatures. Thou perceivest why they fail so egregiously. Up, then, and be doing! Give them a specimen of brave, heroic behaviour. Shame their pusillanimity, by letting them see what a conqueror of difficulties thou art. What! that is not possible? Thou canst not act? Oh! then, be honest. Suspend for a little while thy lofty scorn of the crawling creatures around

thee. Learn to say frankly, "My soul cleaveth to the dust."

II. For from this confession, when it is really one, when it rises as a sigh out of the deeps, there comes the prayer, "*Quicken Thou me according to Thy word.*" Then it is that man begins to believe in God; for then he begins to believe that he himself is not God. A Maker of the world he may have acknowledged before, acknowledged in a very complimentary fashion. "No doubt some Intelligence called into existence this system of things, which ministers so much to my convenience and comfort. Where there are so many nice adaptations of things to one's wants or wishes, it is reasonable to suppose a goodnatured contriver; one who had rather on the whole that we were happy than that we were miserable." But he who surveys this universe, he who can understand this system, he who can descant eloquently on these adaptations, is not he for all practical purposes more wonderful than the Being of whom he forms this vague and distant conception, on whom he bestows this occasional homage? This judgment, this reason, this will—I may argue myself into the conviction that there is something answering to them in Him: I feel and know them as my own.

Oh, brethren, it is not till a man has a very clear and painful conviction that they are *not* his own, or that if they are his own, they will fade into nothing, they will perish utterly; it is not till then that he be-

gins heartily to confess that there must be a Reason, a Will, a Judgment higher than his own, absolutely good, by which his own may be renovated. As long as a man believes that any new circumstances will set him right, he worships those circumstances. When he despairs of all circumstances because he finds that the failure is in himself, he is disposed for a time to worship nothing, to own nothing but shadow and vacancy. When that vision has become intolerable, when he is sinking further and further into the mire where no ground is, he cries, *Quicken me;* scarcely knowing to whom the prayer is offered, only convinced that he must pray to some Being who can hear. And then there comes such a witness to him that this faith, strange as it is, is not an illusion, he gives his petition definiteness, *Quicken Thou me.* "Thou, of Whom I have heard in my childhood as renewing my life every morning; Thou, Who I have been told art the Giver of all good things, therefore surely of these purposes, these powers, this will, which are the most precious of all things. Do Thou quicken that in me which must live in order that I may be a man, but which is cleaving to the dust; which appears to be doomed to a more terrible and utter death than the frailest insect and flower which I behold."

The Psalmist did not stop here. "*Quicken Thou me,*" he says, "*according to Thy word.*" "Sunk as I am, I do not count it a possibility, even a high probability, that Thou wilt help me and raise me. I be-

lieve Thy word has gone forth that Thou wilt. I believe that all Thy revelations to my race and to mankind mean that Thou wilt. Thy promise would come utterly to an end for evermore; Thy faithfulness, which is the foundation of all faithfulness among men, would not be the rock that it is, if I might not ask Thee with confidence to endue me with the strength without which I cannot be Thy servant; cannot fulfil any of the tasks which Thou hast sent me here to fulfil. Thou wilt not ask me to prove that it is not through my own fault that my soul cleaveth to the dust; that I have not destroyed my own powers and energies. I confess that charge; I have sinned, and sinned against Thee, Who hast lent me those powers in trust which I have used as my own, and for my own ends. But Thou art the Forgiver of sin and the Deliverer from sin. Thy word declares Thee in that character, *Quicken me according to that word.*"

I said, brethren, that this sentence seemed to me to contain the very essence of prayer, to be the explanation of all prayer; the necessity for it lying in a man's discovery of his weakness; the hope of it lying in the nature of God Himself, and in His relation to man. As long as that weakness can be referred to anything but the man's own will; as long as he feels the bondage to be in something else than that, he may ask for rains or fruitful seasons, for the relief from some pain, for the gift of children or of friends. But he will not say, *Thy will be done on*

earth as it is in heaven; he will not understand that this is the greatest blessing which the creature can ask or the Creator can give; that by this the Creator becomes a Father, and the creature a child. That lore comes when he has found that all treasures which he can dream of, or any demon could bestow, are worthless or are mischievous, if there is not a free and loving will to receive them. That lore comes when he perceives that his will can only be free and loving, when the free and loving Will that formed his has subdued it to itself. Then prayer becomes, not a desperate experiment to compel that which is better into consent with that which is worse, but the cry of a spirit after that Spirit which can unfold all its capacities,—can rescue it from an independence that has ended in slavery,—can remove from it the curse of perpetual barrenness,—can reveal to it the Eternal Good for which it longs, and without which it will never be at rest.

III. I have taken this short Jewish prayer as a summary of all Jewish prayers, as an induction to all Christian prayers. My special reason for choosing it as a subject this afternoon is, that I know of none which explains so well that Collect in which we try to embody what we have been asking for since last Advent, what we shall need in every year that is coming: "*Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously*

rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This prayer assumes that we, in this nineteenth century, are in essentials the same with the man who complained that his soul clave to the dust. It assumes that no improvements in our outward condition, no progress of civilization, has made it less likely that we should become inwardly torpid, incapable of earnest, manly effort. It assumes that the deepest and most rational of all petitions, is a petition for the renovation of the Will. It assumes that this is also the most universal petition, that in which the well-being of individuals is not more involved than the well-being of Families, Nations, Churches, the Universe. It assumes that only God can stir up the weak will of a man, can quicken the corrupt will of a society. It assumes that such quickening is the one security for the bringing forth the fruit of good works, a vigorous moral state being the source of all vigorous moral acts. It assumes that all acts proceeding from a right and loving will, receive a plenteous reward from God; the reward of deeper acquaintance with His Will; the reward of helping to accomplish the purposes of that Will, and at last of seeing them accomplished.

These principles are implied in this prayer, as they are in that of the Psalmist, and in all prayers. For the earliest prayer, as much as the latest, demands both the convictions which in controversies are always set in hostility to each other,—demands them both in their full strength. It invokes that absolute Divine

Will, the acknowledgment of which is supposed to involve the destruction of free agency in man, to give him the free agency which, left to himself, he wants,—not having which he must be wretched. It invokes that absolute Divine Will, in the full assurance that all its operations, from the Creation to this hour, have been intended to break men's bonds asunder, to raise them from captivity to a throne. But the writer of the Collect can face this great paradox of humanity as the writer of the Psalm could not. For he says "through *Jesus Christ our Lord.*" He prays through Him Who has on this earth manifested the perfect Will of God as a Will to the Redemption and Reconciliation of the Universe; Who has in His own person removed the hindrance to that Redemption and Reconciliation; in life and death subjecting the human will to the Divine; establishing the perfect harmony between them. He prays through Jesus Christ, Who came to baptize with the Holy Ghost, that wills cleaving to the dust might be quickened, that Mankind might be reconstituted in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the one God blessed for ever. Believing in that name,—that we are living, moving, having our being in it,—we are able to regard prayer as not less, but more, the organ of the will or spirit of man than Logic is the organ of his Intellect. We can encourage the most baffled, desperate man to cry, "*My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken Thou me according to Thy word!*" And if there is one adjective

in the Collect which seems to make it unfit for our use—if we dare not call ourselves "thy *faithful* people," when we feel as if our unfaithfulness were the very reason why our wills need to be stirred up, —as if through our unfaithfulness all good fruits had been checked and killed, all great rewards withheld—let us remember that the moment we begin to ask new life of God, confident that we are asking according to His Mind, that moment we return to our true condition, as faithful, trusting creatures. Let us remember also that we are not alone in our prayers. We belong to the Church of the firstborn. That Church, which is composed of just men made perfect, as well as of saints upon earth, stands complete in its Head and Mediator. That Church, faithfully trusting in God's gracious and unchangeable Will, asks in the strength of the one prevailing Sacrifice, through the Eternal High-Priest who sits at the right-hand of the Father, that all enemies may be made subject to Him,—that all may become willing in the day of His Power.

HOMILY I.

ON NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS.

This November we begin to disuse what are called the State Services. I wish to tell you why I rejoice that the two Houses have asked the Queen to suspend the order which appoints them. That I may make this explanation, I must also tell you why I cannot sympathize in some of the reasons by which that step has been justified.

I shall not refer to the question of the authority upon which those Services stood. As a clergyman, I felt it no hardship to obey an Order of the Queen in Council. If they were National Services,—Services to bind the nation in one by recollections of the past, or thanksgivings for the present,—I know not from whom they could proceed better than from the Sovereign of the land. Ecclesiastical punctilios interfere grievously with ecclesiastical duties, and therefore, in the truest sense, with ecclesiastical power. They are for idle men, not for those who have a work to do. Many used the Services, while the command lasted, —not at all liking them,—out of mere loyalty. Still, if the consciences of any were disturbed on this

ground, it is better that they should be relieved; in a thousand cases, what strike us as idle scruples, are so mixed with deep convictions, that we are bound to indulge the first, rather than wound the other.

Another motive for ceasing to commemorate the Gunpowder Plot, the Martyrdom of Charles, the Restoration, and the Revolution, has been assigned with great distinctness in the most influential public journals, and has, no doubt, been recognized as the true one by many of their readers. "We know," it is said, "well enough, that the discovery of the plot was owing to the wit of Cecil; the death of Charles, to the victory of the army over the Parliament; the return of his son, to the intrigues of General Monk; the success of William, to the confusion and imbecility of James. Why refer any of these events to a Divine origin? Such language does not belong to our age; it is not the honest expression of our feeling. We have been forced by these Services, against our better judgment, to take up the tone of those chronicles, written in the infancy of criticism and philology, which referred all events to a supernatural cause, because the natural causes were unknown, or were wilfully overlooked."

Assuredly all cant language, all language which does not correspond to the truth of things, and does not express the genuine convictions of those who utter it, is odious and mischievous. That there are passages in these Services which deserve that character, I am

far from denying. I have more than once pointed them out to the congregation which meets in the chapel at Lincoln's Inn, believing that it was a duty to the cause of God and of truth that I should do so. But I have never admitted, nor can I admit now, that the error lay in their attributing ordinary events to God, in their introducing a too devout and habitual recognition of Him into our thoughts of our country's history. My complaint of them is just of the opposite kind. I think they too much reduce the tone of history to the tone of the newspaper. I think they have encouraged those habits, from which a deeper awe and reverence of God, a more steadfast belief that He is working in the transactions of the world, would deliver us. The study of the past should help to raise us above the turbulent passions and low party-spirit of the present. The sense that we are under the same Divine government as our forefathers, should enable us to call them back to life, to feel that their deeds are not merely written in books, but have helped to constitute our actual England. I utterly deny that it is sound historical criticism, that it is profound philology, to trace events which have been the produce of a long past, and which are to bear fruit in a long future, to some petty accidents, or the contrivances of some cunning man. No writer of history is content to do that. If he despises the mythical ages, it is one of his pleas for despising them, that they did not know how to connect events together, that they referred

them to no common law. He, on the contrary, is a philosopher; he sees into the meaning of things; he can show how one age has grown out of another. A very desirable faculty indeed, if it is not spent in mere phrases; if he does not invoke the spirit of the age like a necromancer, or substitute vague generalizations for living men. That he does this so often, drives many to the chronicler, who at least tried to record acts, if he understood the cause of them ever so little, or to the modern newspaper, which gives proper names and gossip, if it gives nothing else.

May it not be that the belief in One who was, and is, and is to come,—of an actual Lord over nations and men,—would save us from some of the temptations to which we are exposed, when we seek our history from any one of these classes? Might it not enable us to profit by them all? The old chronicler was apt to look for a Divine intervention in particular cases—for some breach of law, generally to favour the cause which he was advocating, or to crush its antagonists. He who believes that the King of kings is never absent from His dominions, is never for a moment forgetting those over whom He is ruling, may see in special crises the manifestations of His presence,—days of the Lord. But he will not suppose that what awakens men out of their lethargy is really more Divine than the Will that is moving and acting when they are in their lethargy. The startling event is to make them acknowledge Him who was in that place, though they

knew it not. The apparition of the righteous Judge is not to give one part of the nation a triumph over the other, not to exalt one school or faction, but to make its members feel that they are one body, sharing the same blessings and the same punishments—to make them ashamed of their factions, afraid of continuing in them.

So, again, it would be impossible for a person really entertaining this faith, to look upon History as a dreary series of antecedents and consequents, such as one class of writers would make it; as a mere exhibition of heroic men exalted above their fellows, with a right to despise them, if not to trample upon them, such as it appears to another. With a Divine Will ruling all the course of the world, human wills must be the most wonderful parts of the study. How they have fulfilled their work, or refused to fulfil it; how they have understood it, or misunderstood it; must be the most earnest of all inquiries. No mere events can be contemplated without reference to these. And the historian, being well assured that the Will of God is for the manifestation of good and for the putting down of evil, will naturally be attracted to the best men, not to the worst; being convinced that he can only know the worst through the best, will naturally seek the good in each man rather than the evil, that he may hate the evil more. But he will have no preference for Titanic men, though he is bound to do them and their powers all justice. He is certain that order

and government are what God designs for men. He is certain that no true man exalts himself above other men, but seeks to be in sympathy with them, and has power over them in proportion to his sympathy.

Thus also he is preserved from uttering oracles, like the newspapers, or from coveting their power. He cannot overlook the world as they do, believing that it is overlooked by One to Whom he can safely trust it; only desiring to understand a little of His ways in it. Thus the present will look as grand and awful to him as the past. The revolutions of his own day can be as little trifled with as the revolutions of former days; they too are the voices of God; they are days of the Lord. If he could keep that thought continually in remembrance, every fact would seem to him a wonderful and a terrible thing. To find out what it is would be worthy of all diligence; to pervert it for any purpose of himself or of his school would be a great enormity.

This transgression, was, I think, sanctioned if not committed by our State Services; therefore I am thankful that we are rid of them. I cannot tell whether any Members of the Houses of Parliament had a liking for some one of them, but were content to abandon it that they might be delivered from another which they disliked. My own aversion is quite impartial. I as much object to the denunciation of Papists in the 5th of November Service as of Puritans in the the other two. In each case I think the truth of history

was sacrificed to ferocious animosities; that those animosities should have found their way into prayers and thanksgivings, changed the sin against man into a direct sin against God. To speak of them as confessions of sin is monstrous; they were confessions of other people's sins, not of our own. We denounced them; we were pure. What could be a greater perversion of the meaning of God's judgments, than to say that the evils of the Stuarts' reigns were owing to Papists and Puritans,—that Churchmen and Royalists were not guilty of them? If these were acts of repentance, all that we call repentance in our other Services means nothing. I do not say that we might not read the Services with a very deep sense of repentance; but it was by imparting a sense to the words which the words themselves do not convey; it was by mourning that some of those words should ever have gone forth.

It is, however, a serious question whether even this passionate partisanship is not better than the coldness to which it may give place. Many of us have perhaps at times asked ourselves if it would be quite safe to part with even the vulgarest Guy Fawkes procession, which kept a people in mind of their own past. We need not have wasted time in such thoughts; ceremonies do not quickly disappear; they survive the associations originally belonging to them: till they become positively mischievous, of course, no one would dream of putting them down.

But some think that we should invent new commemorations; which might be lessons in history, bonds to the members of the nation, encouragements to trust in God. If they were likely to answer any one of these purposes, I do not think we can have too many of them, or can establish them too quickly. How good it might be to commemorate the signing of Magna Charta, if we could set forth to the people the history of that transaction; if we could use it to explain the meaning of Constitutional Government! But we must first believe in Constitutional Government; believe it as earnestly as that good and wise man does who is sentenced for it and for his love of England to a French prison; believe in it as a gift of God, as a reality; implied in the existence of parliaments, not created by them; often brought into disgrace by their misdoings. Such a belief I hope we shall some day recover, or rather that we shall hold it with a fullness of meaning with which it has not been held yet. But clearly it is not ours at present. People joke about Constitutional Government having been weighed in the balance and found wanting. They think Absolutism, on the whole, more convenient. If he can connect the Constitution with some party cry, it may be worth something to the Statesman; if he can connect it with some religious opinion, it becomes godly in the eyes of the Churchman: otherwise the first pronounces it obsolete; the second, "merely secular." Such lessons all classes

among us have learnt or are learning. The Aristocracy, who fought for the Constitution in old times, have come to identify it with some of its meanest accidents, or worst outgrowths; to think that when they defend them, they are defending it; when they are obliged to abandon them, that it must go. The Middle Classes, who owe everything to the constitutional principle, cannot ascertain that it adds materially to the trade of the country; why therefore should they preserve it? The Working Classes have not yet discovered what a deep and earnest interest they have in it; they have an excuse for thinking that the phantom which has been presented to them in that name is an enemy, not a friend. What chance then of a hearty popular or religious celebration of any of the events connected with its manifestation or its growth?

A plausible suggestion has been made. This very month the tercentenary of Queen Elizabeth's accession has occurred. Might not that event unite the sympathies of all people? Is it not one for which we should give thanks to Almighty God? I think it ought certainly to unite English sympathies, for it was the commencement of the most English reign in our annals. I think we cannot praise God too much for it, seeing that it betokened an outburst of life in our country—of enterprise, of thought, of song—such as we can only refer to His teaching and government. Moreover, the Queen herself was so evi-

dently the human centre of the nation, the awakener of its energies and of its chivalry—the very pulse of the machine—that one cannot be wrong in connecting with her the blessings of her time. So far, then, it would seem as if not the third century only of her accession ought to be remembered,—as if it might give rise to an annual celebration.

But I feel convinced that this event also could not be commemorated nationally, that it would be an excuse for factious statements, and therefore for the perversion of history and the dishonour of God. Queen Elizabeth will be celebrated as *par excellence* the Protestant Sovereign. But we mislead our people if we give her that name. They associate Protestantism with dislike for a splendid ceremonial in worship. She had a partiality for such ceremonial. They think—perhaps truly and naturally—that it is specially opposed to the celibacy of the clergy. According to accounts at least credible, she was in favour of that celibacy. They think perhaps it means special severity to Romanists. She no doubt put to death Jesuits who conspired against her without scruple. But she was nowise inclined to tolerate Puritans—the most vehement opposers of Romanism. Her foreign policy perhaps will be regarded as peculiarly anti-papal. I have no doubt that it was so in effect. But before we can prove that she meant it to be so, we must explain why the relations with France were not more affected by the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; why she en-

dured one of the most wicked of the French princes as a suitor; why William of Orange complained so much of the want of help from England.

I do not dwell upon these acts or omissions as greatly detracting from her character or usefulness. I think she did more for England—more in the best sense for Protestantism—than if she had thrown herself more vehemently into the cause. She was more completely a National Sovereign, the upholder of the Nation as such against Papal or Spanish Catholicism, than she would have been if she had cared more about the mere points in dispute between the parties. She looked up to God directly as the source of her power. The Bible was the witness to her of the only foundation upon which she or the country could stand. The more these facts are brought out, the more we shall understand her and the blessings she was the instrument of conferring upon us. But they would not be brought out in a national celebration. That would become an occasion for special pleading on behalf of Protestantism merely as a set of religious opinions, —of Protestants as a sect. And so the next age; when it was essential for the good of the land, for the discovery and assertion of important truths, that the parties which she held in union should stand face to face with each other; that the relations of parliaments to kings should be thoroughly ascertained; that the Stuart dogma, which went near to confound the earthly king with the King of kings, should be exploded; that

the idea of a Kingdom of God should be proclaimed, if the attempt to realize it was ever so great a failure, —this age would become unintelligible from the use of those vague general phrases which suit parties very well, but which utterly confound us, like the generalizations in physics, when we try to investigate, humbly and devoutly, the order of God's Universe, the course of His Providence.

Still more would this treatment of Queen Elizabeth's reign hinder us from appreciating the obligations which are laid upon those who belong to the reign of Queen Victoria, from treating faithfully the records of her times. For hers, I trust, will be not less a national reign than that of the Virgin Queen was. But as that very name indicates a relation, besides that of sovereign, into which Queen Elizabeth did not enter, and which it concerns us most deeply that our Queen has entered, so I apprehend the Family and the Nation must together lead us on,—as the mere nationality could not lead on Queen Elizabeth's age,—to the discovery of a higher Catholicism,—not incompatible with them, as the Papal Catholicism which she resisted must be,—but sustaining them against the Class and Sect spirit, against Mammon worship and individual selfishness, which are their common foes. Towards such a Catholicism the most anarchical movements in our time are pointing the way. Without it the claims of the great working body in our own country cannot be satisfied; the noble, the professional man, and

the trader, cannot take up their position as its allies and leaders. Without it, the idea of a general fellowship among nations will sink into the idea of a mere customs union, and even in that low form will not be realized. When this true Catholicism in Christ has been attained, each nation may begin again to celebrate the great men who have contributed to establish it, the great crises in its history; such a celebration will indeed be a *Gloria Deo in excelsis*. Till then, it is better that we should endeavour, each in his own sphere, especially by cultivating the honest and devout study of history, to hasten its approach.

HOMILY II.

ON THEOLOGY AND GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

The clergy of London have been asked to join in a protest against a proposition which has recently issued from the new India Board. The President of that Board has declared that the spheres of theological opinion and of government are entirely distinct. The protesters see in this maxim the commencement of a scheme of policy which shall identify the Queen, now the direct ruler of India, with that doctrine of religious neutrality by which the acts of the Company during the period of its supremacy were directed. England, they think, will be forfeiting her national position, her duty to the religion which she professes, by committing herself to this course. They wish therefore solemnly to state to the Sovereign why they think she is pledged, by her position and her oaths, to a different course.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of these propositions in themselves, even apart from the consideration of the millions of beings who may be affected by their truth or their falsehood in Hindostan. We should not therefore, it seems to me, be in haste

to express our concurrence with either of the statements which are in actual or supposed opposition. We should ask carefully what each means. I do not think that a statesman so accomplished and so well read in history as Lord Stanley can mean that the spheres of theological opinion and of government are separate *in this sense*, that governors have found it very easy to prevent them from becoming confused with each other. He must know perfectly well that those who have been most anxious that they *should* not interfere, have nevertheless found in practice that they did. The Romans were exceedingly tolerant. If some, from a general habit of tyranny, would have meddled with a new faith, as they would have meddled with a new game, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius would surely have been disposed to let theological opinions alone. But they could not. They came to the conclusion that the Christian Church and the Imperial world were rival kingdoms; that one must extinguish the other or make it a servant.

That was an experiment on a large scale. I pass over the age of the new Western Empire, in which theological opinion and government were of course confounded; the *Capitularies* of Charlemagne mixing them as much as his wars. I pass over the Mediæval period, during which every one will admit that they were kept as little distinct by Christians as by Islamites. But the Reformation was the assertion of the distinct individual Conscience. Monarchs had

apparently nothing to do with it. Yet every prince of Germany was affected by it; the policy of Charles V. was changed by it; France was torn to pieces by it. The monarch of England became, first, the Defender of the Faith; then the great assertor of the rights of the National King against the Universal Bishop. For two centuries it was proved by the wars of the League, the Thirty Years' War, the Civil Wars of England, that the spheres of Government and of Theological opinion, by some strange fatality, will not separate themselves from each other. But the eighteenth century, which substituted questions about the balance of power for questions about Romanism and Protestantism,—did not that establish for ever the division of provinces? Was not that the great triumph of its philosophy? If it was, the philosophy strangely defeated itself. The child destroyed the parent. For it brought forth the French Revolution, and that Revolution asserted, from first to last, not more by the overthrow of Catholicism and Christianity under the Convention and Directory, than in the attempt to restore them under Napoleon: "The spheres of Theological opinion and of Government have not learnt the art of separating themselves more in this century than in the second, or the ninth, or the sixteenth, or the seventeenth."

But if the experiment has been impossible in Europe, has it not been possible in the East? That appears to be the very region in which Theological opi-

nion,—opinion about divine things,—has *most* mixed itself with all human transactions, has *most* affected all the acts of Government. Every relation of life, all intercourse, the administration of justice, clothing, food, cleanliness, all are not indirectly, but directly influenced by the "theological opinion" of the natives. Supposing the rulers to have divested themselves of all theological opinions—formally and practically,—still they bring their traditions, habits, an indifference, a scorn, which will come into collision in a thousand ways with that they find, and will compel the interference of a Government, wishing to maintain its own position, wishing even to protect its Hindoo or Mussulman subjects.

Of course Lord Stanley is better acquainted with these facts than any of us are; of course he cannot have intended to ignore them. And he cannot have the slightest expectation that a *sic volo, sic jubeo*, proceeding from a Board not six months old, will create a division of provinces which so many previous statesmen have been unable to effect. But he has evidently a strong conviction that the working of Government *ought* not to be impeded by theological opinion, and that theological opinion ought not to be made less sound or less sincere by the interference of Government. I do not think the protesters really differ with him on this point. I think they would say that theological opinion among the natives of India often clogs the wheels of Government because it is mixed with so

much falsehood; that it clogged the wheels of Government in the Middle Ages because it was mixed with much falsehood. They would admit also that Governments have done immense mischief to faith, and more by some of their efforts to advance than by any of their efforts to retard it. What Lord Stanley appears to imagine is, that these points being admitted, Englishmen shall work together, and that they may work together more effectually than the members of any nation have done, to prevent those evils, of which experience has given them warning. Here again I cannot believe he is really at issue with those who dread a neutral policy for India, who wish that the nation should do what in it lies for the deliverance of India from an immoral worship.

Perhaps they will exclaim when they hear these words, *immoral worship*, "Yes! you want to preach an ethical religion to supersede that which exists among Hindoos and Mussulmans; but we want Christianity,—definite Christianity." I presume that to be the aim of the protesters. I presume them to wish that a message should go forth to all the races under our rule not less definite than that which St. Paul preached at Corinth and Ephesus; in fact, the very same. Nay, I will go further. Though that was a universal message to all kindreds and tribes, though it proceeded from the member of no dominant race, though in the process of delivering it St. Paul had to encounter the exclusive national prejudices of his own

people, still I do not wish to forget that we are a nation, that we must send forth this message in the form in which we hold it; and therefore I take it for granted that being a Protestant nation we must evangelize India according to Protestant maxims, in a Protestant way. Starting from these premises, let us consider to what conclusion they lead.

There is a Society, as we all know, for the *Propagation of the Faith.* Many Protestants, many countrymen of ours think, I suspect, that this Society would be labouring for a very great and good end, if only it were a Society for the propagation of *our* faith, instead of the Romish faith. They admire, as they well may, the pains which are taken to qualify men for that service, the colleges devoted to the study of the languages which the missionary must speak; the devotion and courage of many who have gone from them into distant lands. "Oh!" they cry, "if such zeal, if such gifts, were but spent on the "diffusion of a Scriptural Christianity! Oh, if our "Government would favour efforts on behalf of our "Church, as some Governments of the Continent did "or do favour the propagators of Romanism!"

I cannot join in these longings. It seems to me that the idea of propagating a *Faith* is a false idea in its root; that if we import that idea, we, of necessity, import the Romish system along with it; for it is part and parcel of this system. When we try to throw a faith outward, to present it as a formal thing

to our minds, which can be conveyed and delivered to others, we must mean by it a certain congeries of notions and opinions that we have inherited or adopted. It is a set of theological notions, of tenets concerning God, which we are seeking to propagate. The Romanist at once admits this to be the case. The Church is in custody of certain doctrines, which men ought to believe under peril of damnation; to bring men within the circle which holds those doctrines is the first of all duties. Priests are to fulfil it chiefly. Kings are to aid it with money, patronage, arms, if needed. I am confident that Francis Xavier, and a number of great Romish missionaries, in the course of their labours, became conscious of another object than this. I am confident that another object was unconsciously present to them from the first. The name Christian—even the name Jesuit—suggested to an earnest, self-denying man, not a set of opinions, but a living Person, Whom they might proclaim to men everywhere as their Saviour and their King. Still this must be the Propagandist maxim; a Romanist would have a difficulty in framing any other which should define, clearly and adequately, the end for which he goes forth among savages or civilized men, amongst heathens or heretics.

I think *we* ought to have no such difficulty. I think there is a word which expressed very distinctly to the Apostles what they were sent into the world to do. They were to preach a *Gospel;* not certain

tenets of certain doctors or of a certain Church concerning God; but His own message concerning Himself. The Reformers clung vehemently to this phrase, as denoting their work at home. Our ancestors, when they became alive to the duties and responsibilities which we had contracted towards our colonists, adopted it as significant of our missionary work abroad. In King William's days they established a Society, not for the propagation of the *Faith*, but for the Propagation of the *Gospel*.

I am not inquiring now to what extent the acts of that Society have been worthy of its pretensions. That it is less magnificent in its plans and its machinery than the body in Italy to which it corresponds, all will admit. I should be inclined to say that in its feeblest time it had given some proofs of the blessing of a rightly chosen title; that in its best times it had not quite cleared itself of the false associations belonging to the title which it rejected. Its admirers have a right to boast that it has proclaimed, with special earnestness, our duty to the children of our own soil; its enemies may say that it has not cared enough for the outlying world. But the last, even more than the first, would prize the word Gospel above every other,—would admit that word to have a peculiarly Protestant sound. This is the point I am pressing now. I want that Churchmen and that Statesmen should earnestly consider what we mean when we say that we have a Gospel, or good news, to declare to all nations.

To the first the doctrine is at least a familiar one; part of their earliest belief and education. People may often say to them—"What? you know these "things, then, that you are going to proclaim? You "are sure of them? You can announce them as if "they were true?" People may say this with some wonder; perhaps with some contempt. But Churchmen have always made answer in act, if not in word, "Yes, we *do* speak of things that we have known, "we testify of that we have seen. We have indeed "had, we have often now, racking doubts whether "anything is, whether *all* things do not seem, whether "we are not ourselves mere shadows of the dream. "And that which saves us from this horrible confu- "sion, in which all action is impossible, all thought "impossible, is just the belief, GOD IS. We are in "an order, not a chaos, because there is an absolute "Being, a living Being, a righteous Being, from whom "law and order proceed. We look upon every mytho- "logy as a search after that Being, a series of expe- "riments to feel Him and find Him. Believing that "He is, and that all men in their inmost heart need "Him, and must make lies about Him if He does "not reveal Himself, we think He has answered the "cries which He has taught His creatures to pour "forth. We believe He has revealed Himself in His "Son. Our fathers came at that conviction by hard "fighting. To believe in dark gods, bloody gods, "hateful gods, was their inclination. Continually

"that inclination returned. It mingled itself with
"their faith that there was a righteous God, who had
"shown Himself to men in His only-begotten Son;
"who had reconciled them to Himself, and had
"claimed them as His children; who had endued
"them with His Spirit, that they might be like Him-
"self. But that faith, held amidst all inconsistencies,
"was that which kept them from sinking into the
"cruelty, superstition, foulness that were natural to
"them. It led them to struggle after manhood and
"bravery. We have as hard work to retain the belief
"in this Name as they had to receive it. It has as
"much to fight against in us as it had in them. If
"we take it as an heirloom from them, we take it
"surrounded with many opinions and habits which
"are at variance with it. We have had to grasp it
"for ourselves, as our protection against superstition,
"grovelling thoughts of God, hateful feelings about
"men, an unbelief in the glory of our race, a readi-
"ness to become cowards and slaves, by which *we*
"are every instant beset. And because we believe
"that God is the God of Hindostan as well as of
"England; because we believe that Hindoos and
"Mussulmans have thought about Him, felt after
"Him, in their different ways, and that their whole
"history and life have been moulded by their specula-
"tions; because we believe that it is God's will to
"reveal Himself to them; because we see no hope
"of their deliverance from moral and intellectual and

"physical degradation, but from this knowledge: "therefore we will, as Christ's messengers did of old, "preach this Gospel to them. Those may call it a "theological opinion who will; the other name is "shorter and simpler, and expresses our object far "better." So Churchmen have been wont to speak; so, I trust, many of them speak still.

"Oh yes," it will be said, "that high discourse "may do very well amongst *us*. But it is not intel- "ligible to Statesmen. We must talk to them about "advancing our English religion. They may not "agree with us, but they will understand our pur- "pose." Oh, silly, ignoble policy, which has degraded Churchmen, which really makes them unintelligible as well as insolent to those whom they hope to influence! I say that Statesmen *can* understand, when you speak to them of a Gospel to our subjects in India, and that they *cannot* understand, when you speak about spreading a particular religion in India; because they have a calling themselves to preach a Gospel, and they know and confess that they have; and because they have no calling, and they feel that have not, to advance a religion. They have a calling to preach a Gospel;—they do preach one whenever they see that justice is administered in a Law Court, whenever they impose taxes and collect revenues honestly and fairly, whenever, through military or civil servants, they labour to establish order and put down anarchy. All these acts of theirs are witnesses of

Righteousness and Truth. They are parts of Christ's witness; for when He declared God's Kingdom to His disciples or the multitudes by words, He also healed the sick and cast out devils. Any acts of healing to the bodies or outward condition of men, any deliverance from the devils by which they are tormented and possessed, is a testimony against the false and unrighteous powers whom they worship, is a testimony for the true and righteous Power whom we profess to worship. Here is that common national duty to which the remonstrants against our Indian policy think that we are appointed; here is that distinction of spheres which Lord Stanley earnestly desires. The Priest cannot deliver one part of the Gospel message, the civil Ruler cannot deliver another. Each delivering his own, fulfils his portion of the Nation's vocation; each doing his own duty helps the duty of the other.

But how stands the case as to the "theological opinions" of the Native? How it stands while the notion of propagating a *faith* displaces the older Apostolical doctrine — the Protestant and English doctrine—of propagating a Gospel, it is hard to explain; such complications and contradictions are inevitable under that theory. It is quite natural that the Christian Priest, thinking he has to set up his own faith against a rival one, should be very glad of the help of the civil magistrate in crushing what his words are powerless to crush. It is very natural that

the Civil Magistrate, feeling that he is to care for a whole land, should resist that cry for assistance, should even wink at practices which he feels to be unsocial and criminal, because they are part of the popular religion. But this is an inversion of the right and proper relation of the two parties. Naturally the Magistrate is the stern Iconoclast; the Priest, perceiving signs of good, dawnings of truth, under the superstitions of a people, is too inclined to be gentle with them. When both feel that they have different sides of the same message to proclaim,—when neither feels that his business is to suspect and supplant the other,—that will again be the rule. The Civil Magistrate will put down widow-burning or any other enormity, not the least out of compliment to Christianity, simply because it interferes with social order. The Christian Priest will remember that St. Paul laid the axe to the root of slavery, not by denouncing it as an institution, but by telling Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother; he will be perfectly content to follow that precedent in all his intercourse with Hindoos and Mussulmans. He will sometimes point out to the Civil Governor how a venerable institution of the Eastern World may be rescued from its corruptions and restored to the meaning that was hidden under it. He will be certain that the zeal of a Magistrate, bent upon the moral improvement of his land, will always impel him to be sufficiently destructive of the evil rites and

habits that hinder it; to quicken and renovate is *his* function.

So the Teacher and the Ruler will be fellow-workers; they will act in some degree also as checks upon each other, but in a sense altogether the opposite of that which we commonly imagine. It seems to me that Buchanan and the eminent men who were the instruments of establishing an Episcopate in India,—as well as those who have extended it since,—contributed to this end—not chiefly (as it is sometimes said) because they placed the Anglican Church in its full proportions before our subjects and the natives,—far more because they presented the Gospel as the Gospel of a Fatherly Kingdom over all nations, rather than as the announcement of a certain religious system belonging to England. If our Bishops indeed strive to be Fathers,—Fathers to the English of every creed, —Fathers to the Natives,—they will be that which mere Governors cannot be, that which they should not attempt to be. We know in Europe what mockery, what tyranny, lies under the affectation of a fatherly Monarchy. The King who loves his subjects best, will know that he is the just head of a Nation, not the gracious parent of a Family. But awkward attempts to unite the offices prove the need of both. Nowhere, I believe, more than in India may they co-operate for the blessing and education of the land.

The word Education suggests a long question upon

which I shall not enter. But I believe the hint which is given in this paper might make that controversy less embarrassing. The Missionary School in which the Bible is taught, unquestionably presents to the native child a Being altogether unlike those which its fathers have worshiped. The Government School, teaching European Science, outrages the doctrine of the Shasters equally. Both are introducing a light from which the darkness must recoil. Both should do their utmost to wound no feeling of reverence in the child for its fathers, only to make it rejoice that it has been permitted to find what they were groping for. If the Government aims at this end for the sake of peace and order, the Missionary must desire it equally, that he may not kindle self-conceit when he is sent to cultivate humbleness of mind. The task of both is difficult; it will not be easier by their thwarting each other. If they are willing to do God's work each in his own place, He will make the whole nation an Evangelist.

[See the Note on this Homily, at p. 316.]

HOMILY III.

ON PREACHING TO THE POOR.

We are often told that our sermons are utterly wearisome to cultivated people. We are told as often that our sermons are utterly wearisome to the poor. The charges seem as if they pointed to opposite errors, as if there must be a special remedy for each. "One class of men must be found," it is frequently said, "who are competent to treat of all the subjects in which scholars and men of science are interested; another, who, having few acquisitions, and little to distinguish them from the mass of the people, shall understand their wants, and shall speak to them simply and broadly."

These remarks have a very plausible sound. So far as they refer to the inefficiency of our ministrations among the cultivated and the uncultivated,—so far as they involve a call upon us to consider our ways, and to own that the cause of our failure is in ourselves and not in God,—so far as they assume that the services of all are needed for evangelizing the land, and that each has some gift which is not bestowed on another,—so far they are not only

plausible, but true and profitable. They are, I am convinced, full of fallacy and full of mischief, so far as they suggest that our great want has been want of skill in adapting ourselves to the tastes and habits of particular congregations,—so far as they tempt us to cultivate certain tricks of oratory for the purpose of recommending ourselves to them. All these arts commence in vanity, end in disappointment. "I am about to address literary or scientific people. I must show that I can meet them on their own ground." —"We might have got a rather better edition of that kind of lecture at the Royal Institution. Had the preacher really not sense to guess that in our own walk we might discover he was not infallible?"— "It is a congregation of mechanics. I must stoop to their level."—"Could not the preacher give us credit for being a little like himself?"

Yes! that is what both require,—that we should *give them credit for being like ourselves,* for needing what we need, for having a capacity to receive whatever is most precious to us. The common and the human, not the peculiar, is what in his heart of hearts the noble, the doctor, the peasant sighs for. That the first two must give up something which each prizes in order to attain that common blessing,—that the sacrifice is often very hard,—there can be no doubt. The wish for a surrender is often slight; the attempt to make it, clumsy and insincere; yet it is in every one; to foster it should be a chief

business of every preacher. In his own self he must know what the struggle is, though he may be neither noble nor doctor; he must have experienced the bitter bondage of being shut up in particular tastes and habits, of being unable to feel himself a man. And surely he who has fought this battle is fittest also to speak to the peasant or the mechanic. For what is the hardest penalty of that toil, which, taken by itself, has so many blessings? This; that the toiler is enclosed in a circle of narrow tastes and habits; that for him to emerge out of his individual propensities, out of the customs of his class, that he may take up the freedom of a human being, appears almost impossible. How right, then, that noble, doctor, mechanic, should alike repudiate the boast of a man to be a messenger from Heaven, who only recognizes them by their heraldry, their degrees, or their crafts,—whose word is not addressed to something above and beneath all these!

But how can it be avoided? "I can, no doubt," the disheartened clergyman says, "assure all men that "they are equally sinners before God. They accept "the announcement all too readily. They plead it "against my entreaties that they would lead a nobler "and better life. I am driven out of generalities into "charges of specific evils. I must, if I am honest, "tell the rich man of his sins, the poor man of his. "But if I do this, I must surely adapt myself to their "circumstances and conditions. The common huma-

"nity you speak of is, perhaps, a very fine thing. But "if it means common wickedness, that must be dis- "sected into its elements before any one can recog- "nize it or care about it. If it means anything "but wickedness, pray explain what that is; how it "is to become aught but the most shadowy, the most "imaginary of all abstract names; an ideal with "which the rich and lazy may amuse themselves,— "with which the poor, and the preacher to the poor, "can have nothing to do."

Assuredly imaginary abstractions and vague generalities should be got rid of as soon as possible; there can be no greater hindrance to all manly and effectual preaching of the gospel. They are as bad for one set of persons as another; worst of all for the minister. It is therefore a healthy and laudable desire which those manifest, who, finding that people are exceedingly patient of being talked to about *sin*, proceed to speak of *sins*, striking directly at the peculiar sins of lawyers, shopkeepers, handicraftsmen, those of the priest not being omitted, but prominently exposed. And as we know that there was a preacher in old times—proposed to us in Advent time as the specimen of preachers—who, more than any other, spoke both of sin and of sins, who called multitudes to repentance, and took careful account of Pharisees, Sadducees, publicans, and soldiers, we might do well to inquire what his method of teaching was, how he aroused the consciences which we find to be so dead.

The answer is very distinct. "*He preached, saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*" I do not want to get a definition of the Kingdom of Heaven; a definition of it would, I believe, help very little. I only would conjure all clergymen to be asking themselves continually what these words mean; to be assuring themselves that *they*, at all events, are not vague or abstract. It cannot, of course, mean, "Repent, for Hell is at hand." There may be terrible warnings in John's preaching, warnings of punishments very close at hand, punishments threatening the whole land. He may be as much an example to us in the denunciation of those punishments as he is in this, the fundamental part of his message. It may be we shall understand those denunciations much better when we have felt the force of his first words; but they cannot be confounded together. Shall we then reduce "the Kingdom of Heaven" into "the Christian dispensation"? Surely that is betaking ourselves to the abstract for the sake of explaining the concrete, to a phrase at once scholastic and indistinct, that we may not be tormented by one that is popular and living. Would it be very strange to believe that when John said, "A Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he meant this at least, whatever more he may have meant, "The King who you believe is coming to you from Heaven is at hand; He is near; He is claiming dominion over you"? Would not that announcement, if it were true, be the ground

for a call to repent and turn to Him? Would it not explain, better than most digests of divinity explain, what repentance is, and how it is possible? Would it not make the message a common message to the open wrong-doer, and the self-righteous hypocrite; only one which has encouragement for the first, if his evil has become a burden to him,—an infinite humiliation to the other, if his evil is not to become an ever-increasing and more intolerable burden? Would not the deliverer of this message be indeed exalting valleys and levelling hills? Would it not be necessary for such a one to testify that there was a Mightier than he, a King over the spirit and the will, Who comes to baptize men with His Spirit? Would not such a one be certain to say that He who sends that renovating power and life, will also send a fire to burn up what is false and evil? Would he not testify that that fire was even then kindled, and that it would not cease till it had burnt up the chaff of that most religious and most wicked nation?

I have given but two or three hints, such as the readers of this course of sermons will often have met with before, to guide the thoughts of the young clergyman who aspires to be a teacher of the poor, respecting the model which the Church sets before him. When he has considered them, I would venture to ask him, first: Whether, if he could follow this model accurately, he might not have a better chance of escaping from the unreality which he so reasonably

dreads, and into which he so continually finds himself falling? Secondly: Whether he can give himself any good reason why this should *not* be his model; why he should deviate from it, not in accidental points, but in its main characteristic features?

The belief in a Kingdom of Heaven established over men, of a King of Heaven who is ruling in the midst of them, must be the safest ground for all appeals to the consciences of men respecting their special callings and special transgressions. "The righteous All-seer was acquainted with the cheats which thou wert practising with *thy* own heart in His sanctuary, with *thy* vanities and falsehoods whilst *thou* wert speaking His words and offering prayers in His name, priest of the congregation! And with *thy* frauds, how thou didst strive to make the worse appear the better reason, advocate in the law courts! And with *thy* frauds, how *thou* didst adulterate thy commodities, tradesman of the shop! And with all *thy* cheats against thy employers or benefactors or helpers or fellow-workers, poor labourer of the day! He saw these lies. And surely every lie is separating thee from Him, is uniting thee to the devil, is damnation now; even as the habit of lying, the service of lies, is the deep damnation hereafter. But since the King of Heaven is at hand, since He hates this lying of thine with a perfect hatred, repent, turn round to Him, as He is bidding thee do; be delivered from it, as He can deliver thee." If we could follow John

the Baptist's example, this might be our way of dealing with lies of act and lies of the heart. This might be our message to the seducer and the murderer, no less than to the most respectable self-deceiver. The word would go forth, witnessing to each man of One who knew him, governed him, could set him right. It would be a revelation of terror; it would be a gospel of deliverance.

But it would imply no cunning accommodation to the fancies and notions of particular classes. It would be searching to individuals, but it would be essentially human. Yes, human. For though our angry clergyman had a right to be offended with me when he suspected I was talking to him about the notion of a general Humanity, so passing off a mere school formula upon him, yet he must submit, if he reads the Gospels, to hear of a *Son of Man*. He must be confronted with that form of speech in every chapter, almost in every verse. He must ask God (the devil will have given him *his* answer already) whether it is *only* a form of speech,—whether it does not denote a living Person, an actual Ruler, the Head of every man? Let him grudge no toil or agony which brings him to a clear conviction on that point. Let him not think that he can preach to rich or poor till he knows. And then let him consider—for I will not tell him—whether the word Humanity is still a shadow or has become substantial; whether men are merely a collection of nobles, doctors, tradesmen, mechanics, to be

gathered under the one general term, knaves or liars; or whether they are not creatures bearing the image and superscription of the Son of God, and who therefore may be invited, whatever be their places or conditions on earth, to cast away lies, to believe in the Truth, and so to put on the man who is created after Christ in righteousness and true holiness.

But all this is on the supposition that we have a right to speak of the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand in the sense in which the Baptist spoke of its being at hand. Can we do this, or not? Many will say distinctly that we cannot. For have we made up our minds as to the time of Christ's appearing? If not, how can we adopt the language of one who came to testify of His appearing? Would to God that clergymen would torment themselves with this question during this present season of Advent,—that they might have no rest from it! If it dwells on their minds with any earnestness,—if they resolve that it is the most practical of all questions demanded by the work they have to do,—I am not afraid that they should ultimately suppose the solution of it to depend upon the settlement of controversies about dates. They will leave leisurely men to occupy themselves with such investigations, and will not care the least to intrude upon them. For they will be certain that if Christ has come, if the King of the World has been revealed, He must be at hand now, precisely as John the Baptist said He was then, ruling over men,

dwelling among them, acquainted with their secret acts and secret thoughts. And to tell men this, precisely in the words that John the Baptist used, must be right now if it was right then, wrong then if is wrong now. Oh, let us learn this lesson by heart! We have been believing a cunningly devised fable all along, if this is not true, and may not be spoken out as true. The Gospel is no Gospel at all if it is not a Gospel of the Kingdom of God; if it does not say that this Kingdom is in the midst of us, and that we shall know one day that it has been in the midst of us.

But can we separate this part of John the Baptist's words from the latter part? And did not that part distinctly refer to an approaching judgment of the Jewish nation? I have hinted already that I do not think we can separate the words respecting the axe which is laid to the roots of the trees and the thorough purging of the floor, from those which concern the Kingdom of Heaven and repentance. I quite admit that those words applied to the Jewish nation, and were fulfilled to the Jewish nation. Therefore I believe they apply to us, and will be fulfilled to us. If the same King is at hand, if He is baptizing now as of old with the Spirit and with fire, it cannot be but that He will apply the same processes to those who are the appointed witnesses and stewards of His Kingdom now, which He used with those who were the appointed stewards and witnesses of it in former days.

It cannot be but that now, as of old, He is able out of stones to raise up children to Abraham, and that therefore now, as of old, it is perilous to say within ourselves, "We have Abraham to our father;" to boast that we are different from others, or more loved than others, because on us has been conferred the privilege of witnessing of God's love to all the families upon earth.

What the kind or method of our sifting may be I know not. But I do not think that there has been in any age of the Church a strong effort to evangelize the outlying portions of society, which has not been coincident with a shaking in the whole of that society,—which has not forced on the inquiry, "Have we anything to tell these people which deserves to be called good news? If we have, what is it? Do we believe it?" Again and again there has been found an orthodox no-belief prevailing in the schools, which clearly could not be delivered to the people because it consisted of mere lumps of opinion; because it practically assumed that men could know nothing of God, that they could only receive certain notions or guesses about Him, which doctors deduced from the Book that spake of His Son as the express Image of His person, as having come into the world for the express purpose of revealing His Father to men. Such in essentials was the doctrine of the Church in the thirteenth century, when the Mendicant preachers arose; in the fourteenth century, when the Wycliffites and

the German Mystics appeared to restore some of that human faith which the Mendicants had once kindled, and to undo the practical unbelief which they by their scholasticism and their popular legends had been propagating; in the sixteenth century, when Luther stood up to declare that there was actually a way from man to God, and that the humblest people might walk in that way. At all these periods there was a dead weight of opinion, theological and philosophical, which was crushing down the hearts and spirits of men. The discovery that the people could hear and understand what the doctors said no human beings as such were capable of hearing and understanding, was the reformation of the Church, of philosophy, of theology.

I do not believe that it will be otherwise in our day. Let those clergymen or laymen who dread such a result beware how they encourage these experiments of popular teaching! They will not, cannot, terminate in the opening of a few rooms or a few cathedrals. The shock of them will be felt in the hall of learning, in the palace of art, on every ecclesiastical throne, on those higher thrones whence journalism sends forth its mandates to the universe. Specially and immediately will it be felt by all our religious parties. If they will enter into this movement, they will be obliged to abandon a thousand conceits and traditions which they prize very dearly, which are the very badges that distinguish them from each other. These will be found to palsy all

their efforts, to divide them hopelessly from the people. They may indeed be listened to for an hour, while they expose each other's weaknesses and absurdities. But men who want bread will not long be content with stones. They will hurl them back at those who have gathered them for their neighbours. Denunciations of Romanism may delight the comfortable shopkeeper, who would rather hear about the Scarlet Lady than about the bag of deceitful weights and the scant measure which is abominable; the working man will soon grow weary of them, or will draw inferences from them which would somewhat startle his teacher. Denunciations of Protestant Dissenters may please some well-dressed congregations; they will only suggest to the masses the natural and reasonable reflection that Churchmen have as much of the spirit of dissent—if that is the spirit of contradiction and denial—as their opponents. Denunciations of Infidels and Atheists will, if possible, be more helpless, more mischievous still. Those who are merely disputatious and negative will become more disputatious and negative; hearts which in their doubt and anguish are crying out for a living and gracious God, will have thoughts which He has awakened stifled by a dead argument or an ungracious sneer, or will be thrust into despair.

But there are Churchmen who pray secretly in their chambers and in the house of God, "From the hardness and coldness of our Orthodoxy, and of

our liberal Philosophy; from the frivolity, meanness, and helplessness of our religious parties; from all the infidelity which comes out of the dogmas of our schools and out of the vanity of our popular discourses; by the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation; by Thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation; by Thine agony and bloody sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord deliver us." To these petitions the agitation respecting a Gospel to the people is the pledge and foretaste of an answer. If it is an assurance that the chaff of all parties must be burnt up, it is also an assurance that what is sound in each, what each has received from on high, not contracted by its mixture with the earth, shall be quickened with a new and divine life. If the High Churchman must give up his puerile attempts to force the minds of Englishmen into the imitation of foreign practices or into the acceptance of any rule or custom which interferes with the sanctity of domestic life or with personal responsibility, he will acquire by that sacrifice tenfold power in enforcing the reverence for the past and the acknowledgment of a Kingdom which God established, and not man; that proclamation will perhaps be effectual with no class so much as with the one which has felt the inequalities of a rule deriving its authority only from convention. If the Evan-

gelical Churchman must withdraw his denial that there is anything in man which can be appealed to against the Adam nature that is destroying him,—if he must give up phrases about depravity which he has got out of books, before he can bring depraved men to hear his message or to believe that he has one,—he may lose the respect and praise of newspapers, but he will have the compensation of feeling that he understands far more deeply and practically than he ever did what Luther meant; what the men of the last century, whom he admires most, meant; he will find that there are responses from spirits to his voice as there were to theirs. And neither of them will be more earnestly listened to, will meet more earnest desires and will give them a better direction, than the Millenarian—the messenger not concerning the past or the present, but the future, when he casts off his slough, leaves times and seasons to the All-wise, but testifies, with undoubting confidence on the warrant of His Revelation, that no one promise of God shall fail, that the evil Spirit is judged, that all enemies of Righteousness and Truth shall be put under Christ's footstool.

When the Gospel comes forth in all these different aspects, each man speaking that which the Spirit has taught him, none contradicting the other, it will be as true in England as I have said it is in Hindostan, that all men, in all lay professions, who do their own work faithfully, will be preaching it. How much

better, medical men have preached it to the poor at their houses and in hospitals than we have done! How far more they have witnessed of Christ the Healer of Sicknesses! How every sanitary reformer who declares that disease and death can be resisted, and ought to be resisted, in every alley and cabin, shames us by his faith in the Conqueror of Death! Is it wonderful that many should think that a clergyman might better devote himself to these works, or to the encouragement of saving habits among the poor, or to giving them a living interest in the politics of their country, than to the uttering of words which often pass into mere sounds, which often seem as if they were spreading death rather than life through the land? The temptation to that belief is strong in some minds; none can tell how strong. But it can be, and it must be, fought against. The messenger of God's will to men—of God's Redemption to men—is needed, that the work of the Physician, of the Sanitary Reformer, of the genuine Politician, may not lose all its energy and all its reward. All alike have to combat with pride, with selfishness, and with the different forms of vice and corruption of which these are the parents. A Baptism of the Spirit and of fire is needed, as much for the physical as for the moral regeneration of the earth and of man. It must begin in the highest region of the Will; it cannot cease till it has purified all the forms of Society, of Nature, of man's inventions. In daring to say we

have a Gospel to the poor, we affirm that there is nothing in His creation so low but He designs to raise it, nothing so marred but that He would restore it to its perfection. A hard, notional, scholastic orthodoxy, an artificial uniformity, may shut the poor man out of that Kingdom which Christ's death opened to him. But the living name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Ghost, the One God, excludes none, embraces all. While we declare that Name to men, we are justifying the highest and boldest desires of men after the knowledge of that which is; we are encouraging them to seek that knowledge in every region where men have ever longed for it. We are meeting also the necessities of the humblest wayfarer. We are telling him that there is a blessing on all his Work, that he has a Rest and a Home.

NOTE ON THE SECOND HOMILY.

Much evidence in favour of the doctrine maintained in this Homily is, I think, pouring in from different quarters. There is a complaint from intelligent officials against the practice of giving Government aid to the secular teaching in Missionary Schools. Should the Missionary desire such aid? Does it not cramp all his efforts? Does it not force him to make a division which he should not try to make; which he can only have been tempted to make by fancying that he had a certain thing called a Faith or a Religion to teach, and certain other things which had nothing to do with Faith or Religion? Colonel Edwardes has also contributed an important help to our conclusions on this subject. He has gone beyond all my conceptions of the relation in which the layman and the clergyman should stand to each other. He would confiscate the property of the Hindoo Temples and of the Mosques. Such a proposition, even coming from a soldier, is very startling. Colonel Edwardes boasted, in his well-known work, that in his province—which, it may be presumed, no tidings of the Clive or Hastings policy had ever reached—an Englishman's lips were supposed to be incapable of uttering an untruth. Can we retain that enviable and glorious, though somewhat perilous reputation, if the acts which he recommends are perpetrated? But *we* have another reason for protesting against it. *We* know that the Gospel mightily grew and prevailed in the city of Ephesus

under the teaching of an Apostle of whom it was testified, by a perfectly impartial witness, that he was no plunderer of temples, no blasphemer of the Ephesian Goddess, an Apostle who, being endued, as we believe, with powers from above, used those powers not for that purpose, but for healing the sick, for showing that the God of whom he spoke was a giver of all good things. *We* know also that three centuries later, in the city of Alexandria, a Bishop not the least like Saul of Tarsus, aided and encouraged by the Imperial Government, led a mob to the destruction of the Temple of Serapis. And we know what came of that vigorous effort to assert the true religion, to propagate the true faith. *We* know that the true religion, the true faith, in Alexandria, never became so false, so mixed with heathenish abominations, as after it had disposed in that reckless manner of the outward symbols of heathen worship. *We* know that Alexandria was destined in the counsels of God to be trodden underfoot of the Moslem, because he was a better witness against idolatry than the Christian. *We*, clergymen, believing, as we are bound, the success of one of these experiments, the failure of the other, to be necessary consequences of obedience and disobedience to the commands and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, must adjure the Government, in His name, not to imitate the example of the Emperor of Constantinople, lest haply it should be said that while bearing the name of the Crucified, they have been practically converted to the maxims of Juggernaut or of Mahomet.

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